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# BOGGSVILLE

*Cradle of the Colorado Cattle Industry*

By C. W. Hurd



*Boggsville Today*



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This little volume is respectfully  
dedicated to the Pioneer Women.

Special appreciation is due the Pioneer Women who braved the West in pioneer days. Their unfaltering devotion and patient heroism saved many a ranch from failure. Their fear of Indians was a constant dread, and their isolation was sometimes maddening.

Mrs. Felix Cain, whom the writer knew, was one of the first comers to the West and she was highly esteemed by all who knew her best. Here is what she said about her neighborhood. "There were one or two settlers between Las Animas and Granada, ourselves, the McMillins, and the Gilmans were about all".

Most of the first settlers to the plains of Colorado were men, and they were a roving lot; but when the women came, the settlements took on stability.



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## Boggsville in 1873



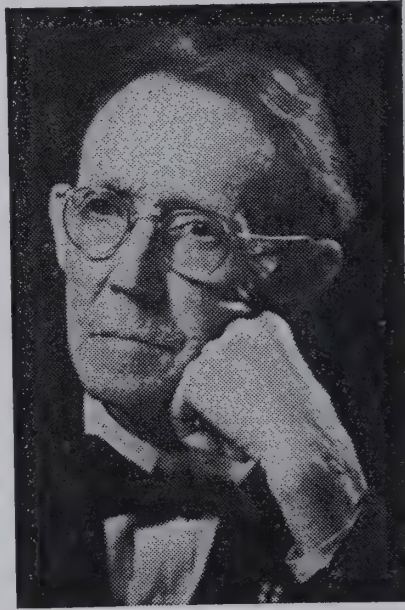
This is Boggsville, the cradle of Bent County's future industries. See the home of Thomas Boggs on the left and that of John W. Prowers on the right, with the small house occupied by Kit Carson, close by the barn in the foreground. The figures under the bulls represent the numbers by which they were known on the registers at Kansas City. The men of Boggsville pioneered the cattle business, sheep raising, irrigation and farming.



## INTRODUCTION

These pages do not contain the history of Boggsville, Bent County, and the Arkansas Valley, but they have been designed as an introduction to it. In brief, we have attempted to answer the questions most frequently asked by our own people, by tourists, and by students of history, regarding men and events that made up the story of this area, during the last half of the nineteenth century.

In delving into these things we catch a vision that is "out of this world", as we are dealing with an age that is passed. Gone is the red man and the cowboy too. Our story is of courageous individuals who were the advance guards of civilization; pioneers who were the builders of an Empire. Mighty men they were who builded better than they knew, framing the destiny of the West and making smooth the way for all who would follow in their train. Their task was the mastery of the wilderness on the frontier. They lived in a physical world. The West that they knew was a land of adventure, wild and stirring.



**C. W. HURD**

From the vantage point of a century we begin to comprehend something of the value of our heritage from the pioneers. They took the world in giant stride without complaining, and without thought of turning back. Our realization of how well they played the game lends enchantment to the scene and adds appreciation of the lot that is ours. •

It all happened here. In all Colorado, no county excels the County of Bent in richness of the romantic story of pioneer days. Boggsville was the pivot point on the most wonderful frontier, in the most interesting period, of all the story of the west.

C. W. Hurd

Las Animas, Colorado

March 8, 1957

## CHAPTER I

# **The Romantic Story of Las Animas and Boggsville**

Las Animas is the gateway to the Rocky Mountain region and all the southwest. Here, when the day is clear, the traveler gets his first view of the mountains from the higher ground that rims the city. Here the sun shines a little brighter and one breathes the pure air that comes from the mountains. The ever-changing panorama is enchanting and convinces the traveler that he is entering the land of his dreams.

In Las Animas, the first city on the Santa Fe Trail with a Spanish name, one catches a glimpse of the Spanish world, which lies beyond Raton. Here, one beholds the dark skinned natives who speak their own language, and ours. The architecture, as seen in their adobe houses, is of the order of the Spanish Southwest. The customs they brought with them from Mexico are maintained by many of the older people; but the younger generation has diligently made haste in the adoption of American ways, and all things new.

Las Animas is a center of attraction for all who are interested in the early history of Colorado and in the story of pioneer days. Within a radius of thirty miles we have an area that excels all others in the state, in interest and in authentic history of early-day events. This area includes three famous forts; and three others were located less than a hundred miles away.

The annals of a century center around Las Animas and its environs. A number of men who were early arrivals in the valley, played leading roles in the doings of their time. They became famous as the "founders of empire" in the West, and their names are known throughout all the land—William W. Bent, Kit Carson, Thomas O. Boggs, John W. Prowers.

In the history of nations a hundred and fifty years is a short time in which to accomplish the development of a country as is seen today up and down the Arkansas valley. The soil that was thought worthless has been found to be extremely rich. Where there was scant rainfall men dug ditches, so that much of the land that was declared desert has become our richest fields. The land where the buffalo roamed has been stocked with horses, sheep, and sleek straight-backed cattle. Each item in the country's development fits in with a man-made economy that has proven to be fitted to the environment; and agriculture has become firmly established along lines that are practical, efficient, and lasting.



## THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

In 1803 the United States bought all of the country north of the Arkansas river from Napoleon and paid him for it at the rate of about three cents an acre. When it came time for United States citizens to move in, the Indians raised objections, claiming that the land was theirs. So the government paid for parts of it again, in peace treaties, and in rations to the local tribes when they became wards of Uncle Sam.

The country south of the Arkansas was Spanish territory and it has a different story. In 1846, General Kearney, with his troops, came up the Santa Fe Trail on an expedition of conquest. He crossed the river at Fort Bent; and from there on he was an invader in a foreign land. When he reached Santa Fe he did not ask the Mexican officials what they would take for their country. He just took it. When the people of the city were gathered together in the city square, he read to them his proclamation and told them that he had come to confer on them citizenship in the great U.S.A. He promised them that the country would furnish them protection in life, property, and freedom in worship.

And so it was for a long period of years—the Arkansas river was the boundary line between the possessions of two foreign nations, France and Spain. When the Louisiana purchase was made, the river marked the line between the possessions of the U.S.A. and those of Spain. In 1821 Spain lost Mexico. Until 1848, when the Mexican war was ended, the river was given due recognition as the boundary line by both peoples. People from Mexico were seldom seen north of the river, while the French trappers and explorers only very rarely ventured into Spanish territory.

Thus, this area, sitting on the very rim of the Spanish frontier, bore witness to interesting events in a conflict of long duration; one that extended from Canada to Mexico, and had its seat in the courts of far off France and Spain.

## THE SPANISH FORT—EL CUARTELEJO

In 1720 a band of Mexican refugees came north and crossed the Arkansas about where it is joined by the Fountain. They followed down stream until they reached the high ground opposite the present site of La Junta. Here they established a crude fort which they called El Cuartelejo. At the same time other Mexicans were found in rude huts along the north side of the river, as far east as the present site of Las Animas. El Cuartelejo had but a brief existence; French forces entrenched on the Platte river soon forced them back to home territory.

In 1739 Mallett Bros. (Frenchmen) crossed the river about where Fort

Lyon now stands and headed for Santa Fe. History records that they were not favorably received.

In 1815 a band of Frenchmen, headed by Choteau and De Munn, established a trading post on an island in the river where the town of Holly now stands. Spanish officials did not like the idea and sent 200 armed men to escort them back to the Missouri. Their wealth in furs was confiscated.

In the Mexican War—1846-1848—Kearney's conquest gave the United States possession of all the southwest country. It eliminated the above mentioned boundary line, and ended the conflict in which our country was becoming increasingly involved, due mainly to the difficulties of trade in Mexican territory.

The end of the conflict marked the awakening of interest in New Mexico. The Santa Fe trade at once grew to large proportions. This, and the discovery of gold in California in 1849, made of the Santa Fe Trail a great thoroughfare. A stage line was established between Westport and Santa Fe in 1850. About 1859 emigrant wagons began mingling with the freighters in their westward march. Aboard some of these were men who were to be leaders in establishing an empire in the West, in the Arkansas Valley, on the plains, and in the mountains. John W. Prowers came in 1856. Thomas O. Boggs came earlier. The main difference was that most of the men who came after 1859 brought their families with them.

Some of the early pioneers settled in isolation; others settled in groups. For the most part, the first comers settled in the vicinity of the Forts where they could have some measure of protection from the Indians. This is why the Arkansas Valley, from the Kansas line to the mountains, with its line of six forts, became the cradle of civilization in pioneer days.

In our immediate vicinity, events that led to the development of the country began with the building of Fort Bent in 1828. Its span of existence was about twenty years and that period has come to be known as "The Golden Age in the West".

In 1853 the scene changed. It moved east about forty miles, and settled in New Fort Bent, later to be known as Fort Wise, and still later as Fort Lyon. In 1867 Fort Lyon was moved to its present site and emigrants gathered around. They settled at Caddoa, Boggsville, and East Las Animas. In ten years, East Las Animas had about faded out, but Caddoa and Boggsville became permanent settlements.

Caddoa was business center for a large territory that extended to the south twenty-five miles, and more. It had a social life that was democratic and fitted in with frontier conditions.

### BOGGSVILLE

Boggsville is the older settlement of the two and it has a history that is characteristic of the early days, yet differs from that of other settlements in Colorado. Its location on the Purgatoire lends enchantment to



the scene. This was a favorite haunt of the Indians. The Cheyennes generally occupied "Big Timber" thirty miles away, on the north bank of the Arkansas. The Kiowas occupied the timber on the south side of the river, opposite the Cheyennes. The Arapahoes sometimes made their winter camp on the east side of the Purgatoire, about fourteen miles from its mouth.

One striking fact comes to light in the notes made by the early explorers in this area. Each of them seem to have been attracted to the valley of the Purgatoire, where the Boggsville settlement was to be. The stream was well-wooded on both sides, and the rich soil produced abundant grass.

Lieutenant Pike wrote in his diary, Nov. 15, 1806, "Before evening we discovered a fork on the south side bearing S 25W. We camped on its banks, about one mile from its confluence with the Arkansas, that we might make further discoveries on the morrow."

In 1820 came Major Long with his band of twenty men. He camped in "The Valley of the Souls in Purgatoire".

On November 13, 1821, Jacob Fowler, a trader and explorer, camped at the mouth of the Purgatoire and recorded some of his observations. "Some of the Kiowas occupy the valley of the upper Arkansas and its tributary the Purgatoire, even during the winter months. The "Big Timbers" of the Arkansas and the bushy shores of the Purgatoire afford them fuel and shelter from the storms."

Some of these explorers tarried several days, enjoying the native beauty of the valley, while their men rested and their horses gained strength on the rich grasses.

All these are passing events that lead to the better understanding of the country, and ultimately they led to the establishment of small settlements here and there, at points that seemed most advantageous.

Boggsville, less than two miles out of Las Animas, attracts our attention for a number of reasons. It is the oldest permanent settlement in all southeastern Colorado. It has a history that is unique among settlements of its time. It has bequeathed to Las Animas a rich heritage in traditions and a way of life, which was the best that our ancestors knew. It was at Boggsville that the rich agricultural empire of the Arkansas valley had its beginning. Boggsville was first in irrigation, cattle raising, sheep feeding, and in general farming. The results of the experiments in these lines, that were carried on at Boggsville, served the community well, and were the basis of future developments in agriculture all up and down the valley, even to this day.

The story of the settlement at Boggsville began in 1860. Thomas O. Boggs, through his wife Rumalda Luna Boggs, secured a grant of land from the famous Vigil and St. Vrain Land Grant, amounting to 2,040 acres. About half of it was on one side of the Purgatoire and half on the other. The north line was about three miles south of the Arkansas.

About that time Mr. Boggs began coming into the valley each summer with a herd of cattle or a flock of sheep and ranging them along the

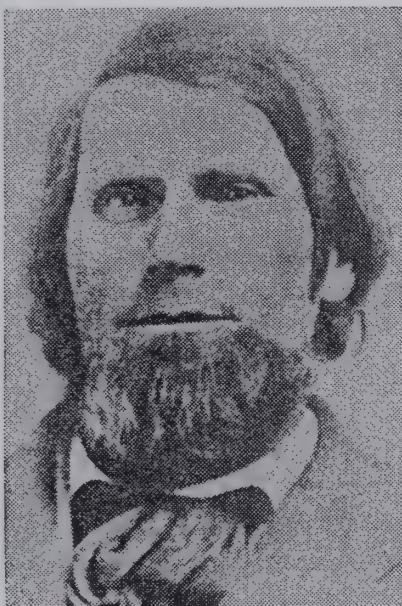
Purgatoire until cold weather came, when he would head back to New Mexico. At that time he was in partnership with Mr. Lucien B. Maxwell on the Cimarron where Maxwell had a ranch of 1,700,000 acres. The livestock which Mr. Boggs pastured was held in joint ownership. On these trips to the Purgatoire Mr. Boggs always had herdsmen with him.

In 1866 his companions included Mr. L. A. Allen and Chas. L. Rite. Together they began the construction of the large adobe house which still stands and is known as the "Boggs House". It was 75 feet long and 50 feet wide. It had nine rooms; there were four or five fireplaces. Some of the walls were twenty inches thick. There was an open court, facing the south.

As some of the rooms were fairly large, the Boggs house became popular as a place for dances and other entertainments, which were attended by ranchers and cowboys who came from all directions. The cowboys would ride fifty miles to attend the dances and box socials.

### THOMAS O. BOGGS

Thomas O. Boggs was born in Indian Territory, among the Osage Indians, August 22, 1824. He first came to the Arkansas Valley in 1840 and was associated with William Bent for about six years. When the Mexican War broke out in 1846 he was drafted for service in carrying messages east to Ft. Leavenworth and as far west as California. In 1846 he married Rumalda Luna Bent when she was only fourteen years



THOMAS O. BOGGS

old. She was a stepdaughter of Charles Bent, first governor of New Mexico under the U.S.A. Mr. Boggs took his family to California where they lived until 1855, when they returned to Taos. In 1858 he was employed by Lucien B. Maxwell at Cimarron.

Thomas Boggs was a plainsman of the best type. He had only a little school training, but he spoke the languages and knew the customs of eleven Indian tribes. At Fort Bent he was employed as a trader, going to distant camps of the Indians with goods for barter. William Bent considered him the most useful, and most trustworthy, of all the men he had at that time.

Captains of wagon trains sometimes called on Mr. Boggs to help them





**The Boggs house, built in 1866 has been occupied continuously since that time. It was social center of the Cowboy World that extended for miles around.**

when they got into trouble. Crossing a swollen creek or a sandy marsh often became hazardous. If a loaded wagon upset in the creek, or a team went down in the quicksand, Thomas Boggs knew just what to do; he could get them out.

On arriving at the Purgatoire in 1866 Mr. Boggs spent the summer in building his large house and in making other improvements. When Fort Lyon moved to its present location in the spring of 1867 he at once launched into farming in a big way. The Fort was a market place for everything he could grow. In livestock, he had horses and some cattle, but his specialty was sheep. In 1875 he had 17,000 head. At shearing time he would shear his own sheep and about 40,000 for his neighbors. His flocks became famous for quality, as he did considerable experimenting with pureblood stock of several breeds. His aim was to find the ones best adapted to the country.

Mr. Boggs was a very kind hearted man and he was known for his many good deeds. When Mr. and Mrs. Kit Carson died, in the spring of 1868, they left seven small children. Mr. and Mrs. Boggs took them into their home and raised them as their own.

In 1870 Mr. Boggs became the first sheriff of Bent County. He was elected to the state legislature in 1871. On August 1st, 1877, the Boggs family left Colorado to live in Springer, New Mexico, where he became territorial governor. Mr. Boggs died at Clayton, N. M., September 29, 1894. Mrs. Boggs lived until January 13, 1906.

## CHAPTER II

# John W. Prowers

One of the men who was neighbor to Thomas O. Boggs, and who joined him in making Boggsville an outstanding community, was John W. Prowers. John Wesley Prowers was born at Westport, Mo., January 29, 1838. He came to Colorado in 1856, and was employed as clerk to the Indian Agent at New Fort Bent. When that job was done, William Bent hired him to clerk in his store, to serve as captain of some of his freight wagons, wherever they might be going.

In 1861 Mr. Prowers married a Cheyenne Indian girl named Amache. They went to live at Old Fort Bent where they had a few cattle and where they managed the stage station on the Barlow-Sanderson stage line. In 1863 they moved to Caddoa, where they occupied the three stone houses which the government had built for the Caddoa Indians. On November 28, 1864, Colonel Chivington arrested Mr. Prowers and seven of his cowboys before starting on his march to Sand Creek. At Caddoa Mr. Prowers raised vegetables for Ft. Lyon; he wintered several hundred head of the cavalry horses and army mules.

When Fort Lyon was moved to its present site in the spring of 1867, Mr. Prowers moved too; he settled at Boggsville. Experience at Caddoa showed that his best bet was to be near the Fort, where he would have a ready market for meat, grain, hay, wood, and all the vegetables he could grow.

He first built a large two-story house of twenty-four rooms which was occupied as living quarters, a store, a private school, and county offices, after Bent County was organized in 1870. It was also a stage station. The house was built in two sections, connected by a single wall. Only one of the sections stands today.

At Boggsville, Mr. Prowers was the leader in business matters and in political affairs. His store was the rallying point for political meetings. His "best room" was the social center for entertaining his friends. Officers from the Fort were his frequent visitors and they were always well entertained. His large store was planned to take care of the needs of ranchers and cattlemen, in groceries, clothing, farm machinery. His patrons came from as much as fifty miles away. He was a very busy man. His more than ten years in the valley gave him a knowledge of the country that was the foundation of his faith in the future. The success he met in farming, in livestock, and in business ventures, fed flame to his ambitions and he became a wealthy man.





**This is the front section of the Prowers house, as it stands today. Its walls are of adobe bricks that were made with grass and weeds as binder. The door and window frames were bought at Westport, Mo. ready cut.**

There was still another side to Mr. Prowers. The longer he lived at Boggsville, the stronger grew the ties that bound him to the little settlement; yet he was a man of the west, and the spirit of adventure was strong in him. He was always ready to move when he could better his plight.

When the Kansas-Pacific Railroad came in from the north, December 16, 1873, it crossed the Arkansas and stopped at the present site of Las Animas. Preparations for big business were being made; Mr. Prowers had a vision of the city that was to be. It was calling loudly "Come hither". He could stand it no longer; opportunity was knocking at the door.

In Las Animas he erected a store-building where the First National Bank now stands. In the rear he built a large warehouse through which most of the freight hauled by the railroad was unloaded for transfer to the great wagons going west and south.

Then he built the first substantial residence in Las Animas, on what is now vacant lots at 715 Carson Ave. There he took up his abode with his family. In 1873 he was busy getting the first school started. In the same year he helped some of the church organizations get going. In 1875 he established the Bent County Bank, in a small frame building

where the office of the Bent County Democrat now stands.

For ten years Mr. Prowers was the leading citizen of Las Animas. He did more than any other man to shape the policies of the town along right lines. His purse was always open to any deserving civic project.

### THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

The greatest thing that Mr. Prowers ever did for himself and his country was in the establishment of the cattle industry. Prior to 1860 people of the plains country had no particular goal. There was no industry, no mining, no farming, no livestock, nothing that would attract a substantial movement of stable settlers. Everyone had gotten the idea that the country was not good for much and they let it go at that; but, in two or three years all was changed.

Mr. Prowers was an observing man and in the few years that he had been in the country he had noticed that when a few cattle were left to themselves through the winter, they stayed along the river, wintered well, and came through in good condition. That gave him the idea that he could raise cattle and supply the forts, which were heavy consumers of meat. He reasoned too, that the plains, which once were black with buffalo, would support vast herds of cattle.

In 1862 he started for Westport, Mo., taking Amache with him. He had \$234.00 in his pocket. In Westport he persuaded a banker friend to lend him enough more to buy a hundred cattle. He drove them home and turned them loose. That was the beginning of the herd that in twenty years was to number 10,000 head. When others saw what Mr. Prowers was doing, they realized that they could do the same, and the cattle industry in the Arkansas Valley was launched in a big way.

Mr. Prowers was a man of high ideals. They were the ruling elements of his life, and showed up in everything that he did. In the cattle business he was not satisfied with just common cattle. He wanted the best and was never satisfied until he found it. It was important for him to find the breed that was best adapted to the country. He did not like the Texas longhorns. The Trassas from Mexico could not stand the climate. He went to Ontario, Canada, to buy cattle for breeding purposes, and he got the best he could find. He made another trip to Ohio. He experimented with Kurry cattle from Ireland and he had the black Angus from Scotland. Of course some of these were brought in at great expense. In the end, he found that of the breeds that were best adapted to the country, the Herefords were the best for beef. He called them American cattle.



Mr. Prowers died at Kansas City, Mo., February 14, 1884, at the age of 46 years. He was buried in the Las Animas cemetery, in a corner of a tract of land that he had donated to the city for use as a burial ground. His grave is marked by an imposing granite monument that was carved in Scotland.

Ten children were born into the Prowers family. The late Mrs. Mary Hudnall was the oldest. At the time of this writing, Mrs. Ida Hawkins of California is the only one of the ten now living. Mrs. Inez Nelson, of Las Animas, is a granddaughter of the Prowers family.

It is remarkable how much Mr. Prowers accomplished in his short lifetime. His influence still lives and his footprints are found all around the town. The value of his estate has been variously estimated, in big figures. We know that a few years before his death he was offered \$775,000 for his holdings in land and cattle.

### CHAPTER III

## An Experiment In Irrigation

In the winter of 1866-67 everyone at Boggsville became interested in irrigation for their settlement. Their knowledge of the country and its climatic conditions came to the rescue in the planning of their farming operations. It was apparent, that if the soil was to be used to its capacity, they would have to devise some means of supplementing the light rainfall. The undertaking was an experiment, as nothing like it had been tried in southeastern Colorado.

The Purgatoire seemed to offer the solution. If they could take the water out of its channel and spread it over the fields, they would have the dry land problem whipped.

Construction of the canal seems to have been begun early in 1867. Those taking part in the enterprise were Thomas O. Boggs, John W. Prowers, L. A. Allen, Tarbox Bros., R. L. Lambert, and Robert Bent, the son of William Bent. The main canal was seven miles long and was known as the Tarbox Ditch. It irrigated more than a thousand acres, on the farms of Boggs, Prowers and Bent. The Bent farm was north of the Prowers land and extended to the Arkansas. The experiment was a complete success. Mr. Prowers had 640 acres under cultivation on which he raised a variety of crops. In 1872 he raised 3,000 bushels of corn. At the Fort it was worth 8c a pound and he sometimes got 12c.

## MR. JOHN S. HOUGH

Mr. John S. Hough, a brother-in-law of John W. Prowers, came to Boggsville in the spring of 1867, bringing a large stock of store goods with him and he became associated with Mr. Prowers in what was known as the Prowers Store. The Houghs lived in an adobe house that was owned by Mr. Boggs; it came to be known as the Kit Carson house, because Kit lived there at a later date. It was about 300 yards east of the Boggs residence; and the two were connected by two rows of cottonwood trees which formed an imposing, shady avenue.

Mrs. Hough, a sister of Mr. Prowers, was the only white woman at Boggsville. She was a very pretty woman, a fine character, and everyone liked her.

Mr. Hough was a Quaker and a man of culture. He was always well dressed, was a fine looking man, and had a magnetic presence. If the weather was not too hot, he usually wore a fine buckskin coat that had been given to him by Kit Carson. It was beaded and fringed in all the art that the Indians knew. His records in the store were written in ink by the hand of a skilled penman. They exhibit a wealth of information on who the patrons of the store were, what they bought, and the prices paid.

In 1869, Prowers and Hough opened a store in Trinidad. Mr. Hough was in charge. Sometime in the mid seventies Mr. Hough moved to Lake City, Colo., where he was connected with the First National Bank and engaged in extensive mining operations. In 1884 he returned to Las Animas to act as executor for the Prowers estate.

## L. A. ALLEN

When Mr. Thomas O. Boggs came over from Cimarron, N. M. in the Spring of 1866 to build a home and establish a ranch, Mr. L. A. Allen came with him. These two men were close friends and they formed a partnership that lasted many years. When county lines were redrawn in 1870, Mr. Allen was made sheriff in the first election held in the county. He served two years without presenting a bill for his services.

When the Kansas-Pacific Railroad came over from Kit Carson in 1873 and made terminus at Las Animas, making it possible to ship cattle to eastern markets instead of having to drive them there, Mr. Allen left these parts and went to Kansas City where he entered the livestock commission business, operating under the successive firm names of:

White, Allen and Company;

Irwin, Allen and Company:



Allen and Robertson;  
The Kansas City Livestock Commission Co.

Many of the Las Animas shippers have done business with these firms. They were leaders of their time in the Kansas City yards, doing a large business with western cattlemen.

Mr. L. A. Allen continued his close friendship with old-timers in Bent County, and as long as he was active, he never missed an opportunity to visit at Las Animas and Boggsville. Death came upon him in 1917. His son, E. A. Allen, shows the same interest in the Arkansas Valley country that his father did and he has furnished, for our files, a wealth of information on early events at Boggsville. Mr. L. A. Allen's work as commission merchant lasted 44 years.

**CHARLES L. RITE**

One of the men who came to the Purgatoire with Mr. Boggs in 1866 was Mr. Charles L. Rite. He was one of the striking characters that made up the Boggsville settlement. He was a German, a Hessian. He came to the United States in 1852. He had a classical education and could speak four languages: German, English, Spanish, and French.

Mr. Rite took an active part in whatever was going on at Boggsville. He helped build the big houses. He helped on the Tarbox ditch. He was Justice of the Peace for several years. When Mr. and Mrs. Kit Carson died in 1868, the bodies were buried in his garden, a short distance south of the Boggs house. Mrs. Rite was a sister to Mrs. Boggs. Mr. and Mrs. Rite had four children.

**MR. P. G. SCOTT**

Mr. P. G. Scott, a man who was to play a leading part in the early history of Las Animas, came to Boggsville from Canada in the fall of 1871, when things were getting hot. Bent County had just been organized; one railroad was drawing near, and it was rumored that another was on the way. Captain Craig had set stakes for his dream town, Las Animas City, on the hill. No one could say what the future of the county might be, but it was surely going to be something great.

Mr. Scott arrived in time to put the finishing touches on the new school house, the first one in Bent County, and he became the first teacher under the territorial government. His pupils, fifteen of them, included one colored child and there were three half-breed Indians.

When he was not busy with his school, Mr. Scott was helping Mr. Prowers. The two became fast friends. Together they went to Las Ani-

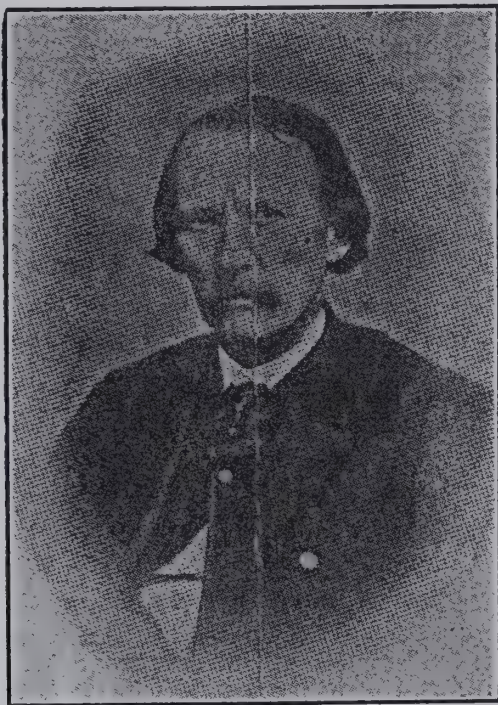
mas where Mr. Prowers built up a big business and Mr. Scott was his right-hand man.

Mr. Scott entered the Bent County Bank as bookkeeper June 1, 1876. He soon became cashier and he remained with the bank to the end of his day, August 18, 1930. He was a man of influence and was one of the city's most respected citizens. He was president of the bank for several years prior to his death.

#### CHAPTER IV

## Kit Carson

Kit Carson and family were late arrivals at Boggsville. They did not get there until about Christmas time in 1867. By that time the larger buildings had been finished, the store was in operation and the work of the little settlement had become routine. The family moved into three rooms of the six-room adobe house which Mr. Boggs had built close by his big barn. The Hough family used the other three rooms. The house was built in the form of an L.



**KIT CARSON**

Kit owned two tracts of land that had been given to him by Ceran St. Vrain. Both were on the Purgatoire: one a short distance south of Boggsville; and the other farther out, in the "Nine Mile" area. He did not make any attempt to occupy either one of these pieces of land as he was not in physical condition to do any hard work.

When he came to Boggsville he had just returned from Washington where he had been called by the War Department for a conference on how best to prevent Indian uprisings. The trip was a hard one for him. He was weary and unfit for work. All he could do was rest. This condition led to serious illness.



In the spring, when the water in the river was running high and the bridge was weak, Carson's physician, Dr. H. R. Tilson of Fort Lyon, decided to take his patient across the river while the bridge still held.

Carson lived but a few days in the home of his doctor friend, passing away May 23, 1868, at the age of 56 years and 5 months. Mrs. Carson had preceded him in death on April 27, 1868. The two bodies were buried in a garden at Boggsville. In October of the same year, they were taken up and moved to Taos, N. M., for permanent burial.

There are about four conflicting stories as to who moved the bodies to Taos. It seems that the best authorities agree on Mr. L. A. Allen and W. K. Irwin.

The first issue of the Colorado Chieftain, June 1, 1868, carries the obituary of Kit Carson, lauding him for the wonderful life he lived. His was a life of self-sacrifice for his country, and devoted to protecting the rights and the welfare of the Indians.

The seven children left by the Carsons presented a problem. The youngest was an infant. The value of the estate was about \$7,000, but there was no cash and the assets were not easily converted. It had been Carson's request that Mr. Boggs look after the children. Faithful to that request, Mr. and Mrs. Boggs took the children into their home and cared for them as their own until, one by one, they became ready to leave home.

And these are the men who molded Boggsville—Boggs, Bent, Prowers, Kit Carson, C. L. Rite, L. A. Allen, John S. Hough, and P. G. Scott. There are others too, deserving of honorable mention but they are of lesser fame; the telling of their deeds must give place to the stories of events that took place while the West was still new.

Early days in Boggsville were filled with thrills. Strange events, characteristic of the frontier, were taking place—the like of which can never happen again, as conditions that made them possible have gone forever.

The people at Boggsville, who witnessed these events and had a part in them, told the stories to their children and to their grandchildren. Some of these stories came to us first hand and now we tell them to you.

#### **WHEN MR. P. G. SCOTT FIRST SAW FRESH SCALPS**

Mr. P. G. Scott told us of the last fight in Bent County between the Utes and the Cheyennes. The Utes of the mountains were the hereditary enemies of the Cheyennes of the plains. This particular fight took place at the mouth of Mud Creek in September, 1871.

## The Kit Carson House



**"The Kit Carson House", 1000 feet east of the Boggs house, is where Kit Carson lived for about five months, prior to his being moved to Fort Lyon in his last illness. The house had six rooms. The Carson family used three of them.**



A band of Utes had been camped at Boggsville for several days, visiting Thomas Boggs, whom they had known when he was Assistant Indian Agent at Cimarron, N. M. When they departed, instead of heading for their home in the mountains, they went east, down the river. They ambushed six Cheyennes and killed five of them, taking their scalps—also, their horses. They got back to Boggsville a little before midnight. Then they put on a war dance, chanting Yo He and Hi Yi, as they pranced around a pole where hung the scalps of the Cheyennes. Mr. Scott looked on in amazement, mingled with fear, but he stayed until the show was over. That was the only time that he ever saw fresh scalps.

### WHEN THE UTES CAME TO VISIT MRS. PROWERS AT BOGGSVILLE

Little Mary Prowers (later, Mrs. A. D. Hudnall) was only five years old when she had an experience with Indians at Boggsville, that lasted her the rest of her life. In spite of the Cheyenne blood that flowed in her veins, the fear of Indians seemed to have been born in her. The members of the Cheyenne tribe were accustomed to stop at Boggsville when passing by, on hunting expeditions or when after fresh scalps. They came to see Mrs. Prowers who had been a Cheyenne maid, the daughter of a chief.

Very early one morning in September Mr. Prowers saw a band of Indians coming from the east. He awakened all the family as, at a distance, he could not tell whether they were friend or foe. There were about three hundred of them. They crossed the Purgatoire easily as the water was low.

When they got near the house, behold; they were Utes. Mrs. Prowers especially feared that tribe, even though they were on a hunting trip and were in a friendly mood.

Mr. Prowers had his men kill a beef and the women made a lot of biscuits. The Indians ate ravenously. When the biscuits were gone another batch had to be made. The cook made Tortillas, (Mexican bread). Mrs. Prowers gave them all the eatables she had, and that was not enough.

Then she took pity on them as some of them were almost naked. She got a supply of calico from the store. Most of it was in bright colors, some red and some blue. She made a lot of shirts, using a single piece of cloth, cutting a hole for the head and two for the arms. There was no need to worry about the fit. The Indians were much pleased with

their shirts, especially the red ones. Mrs. Prowers did the sewing on her sewing machine which was old and made a lot of noise. The Indians gathered close around her to see how it was done. They had never seen the like before.

Mrs. Prowers always tried to keep the doors locked when the Indians were around, if she could. Then they would crawl through the windows, if it was possible to do so. On this particular morning, the chief, and a few others, got in, first thing. There seemed to be no place for Mary to hide. She crawled under the table. The big chief, noticing her excitement, reached after her and pulled her out. Then he mauled her about, thinking that she would get over her fear and might get to like him. Mrs. Prowers was almost as frightened as her child, as she feared that the Indians might want to take both of them to their camp in the mountains, as they had often been known to do. She knew a lot about savagery among Indians of various tribes; but of all the tribes, in her way of thinking, the Utes were the worst.

Mr. Prowers had a patch of melons of which he was very proud. When they found it he treated them generously, asking them to not break the vines and to leave the small melons for him; but the Utes were no respecters of persons, or of melon patches either. His plea was of no avail and they left the melon patch in ruins.

At last, when the meat, the biscuits, the melons, and everything else had been eaten and there was nothing else in sight, the band departed about midnight, headed for the mountains.

### THE DEATH OF THOMAS KIMSEY

It was September 7, 1868, and the first election in Bent County was to be held at Boggsville on the morrow. Thomas Kimsey was to be judge of elections and he had spent the day at Boggsville getting ready for the big event.

Mr. Kimsey lived four miles west of Boggsville on the Sizer Ranch, which is now owned and operated by Adolph Hansen. On the way home he was riding with Mr. Sizer in an open wagon. As they were going through the sandhills two mourning doves circled the wagon. One of them came down and lit on Mr. Kimsey's shoulder."

Mr. Kimsey was startled; his face turned white, and he said, "Doc, that means something; something terrible is going to happen to me". Mr. Sizer tried to make light of the matter, telling him that he should not pay any attention to it. "No, it's a bad omen—you wait and see!" From that time on, he was in a pensive mood and never smiled.



Next morning, when leaving for Boggsville, he shook hands with all and in bidding goodbye he said, "You'll never see me again. Something will get me for sure this time."

He never got to Boggsville. When his friends made search for him, they found his body on the road in the sandhills where the doves had cut circles around him. His scalp was gone.

He, and his companions had ridden horseback that morning. When about halfway to town, a band of about twenty-five Cheyenne Indians came over the hill, riding fast and shouting furiously. Kimsey's companions had good horses and could out-run the Indians, but he was on an old mule that couldn't make it. He begged the others to stay with him, but they could see that any delay would be suicide; it was every man for himself.

### WHEN THE CHEYENNE INDIANS MADE A RAID ON BOGGSVILLE

The Cheyenne Indians, who killed Mr. Kimsey on the morning of September 8, 1868, continued their ride and raided Boggsville. They killed several good oxen with their arrows, and stole a lot of fine horses and mules belonging to Thomas O. Boggs, Robert Bent, L. A. Allen and John W. Prowers.

Mr. Allen rode to the Fort as fast as he could go, to tell General Penrose of what had happened, and to ask that he send troops after the Indians to try to recover their stock.

The General at once called out about forty soldiers of the 7th calvary, put them under Lieutenant Abel, and away they went. After a ride of about twenty miles, they came in sight of the Indians driving the stolen animals. Five miles farther along they came upon four Indians, whose horses had failed them. They were trying to engage the pursuers so that the others could get away with the stock.

The soldiers killed the four Indians but lost two of their own men. Mr. Allen was with the soldiers and recognized one of the dead Indians as one who had previously visited Boggsville and had been entertained by Mr. Prowers. Years later, one of the Indians admitted to Mrs. Prowers that he was one of the band that stole her horses.

The troops were so badly delayed on the fight with the four Indians that further pursuit seemed useless. They returned to the Fort. The Indians were never punished and the stock was never recovered, although some of it was identified in the camps of the Cheyennes a few years later.

Boggs and Allen (partners) filed a depredations claim against the government covering the loss of their stock. It was booked as claim No.

1695 and covered:

32 mules,  
6 horses,  
7 oxen — total value \$8,055.00.

In 1894 the United States Court of Claims allowed a judgment for \$7,280 00. This amount, plus interest, was paid in 1896.

Mr. Prowers and Robert Bent filed a similar claim for \$10,000. The Court of Claims did not order payment on this bill until 1902, and the amount paid was \$6,500. It's likely that interest was added to this amount. (Bent County Democrat—March 13, 1902).

## CHAPTER V

# Boggsville In Retrospect

Boggsville represents an age that is past. Its story is an open book on pioneer days; its pages give a vision of sturdy stock that braved the dangers of the frontier without thought of turning back. Privations of the frontier imposed on its people a simplicity in the home that was endured without complaining. They trimmed their wants to the bare necessities and were content with what they had.

The people of Boggsville had a social standard that was distinctive and honorable, which they finally transplanted to West Las Animas. They were pretty much one big family, bound together in marriage relations and in common interests. The fear of Indians brought them together for common defense; they pooled their resources in time of need. It's likely that the members of no other pioneer settlement in Colorado ever had a higher rating than the citizens of Boggsville. They stood high on every count.

At what fountain did the people of Boggsville drink that made them grow to be big men? Who schooled them in the fine art of living? There was not a rough character among them. Each one was honorable and industrious; each gave a good account of himself. Most of them won distinction, in one way or another. All of them played well their parts and contributed mightily to the establishment of Empire in the Arkansas Valley, on a basis that was practical and enduring.

Boggsville was first in everything that contributed to the development of the country. Thomas O. Boggs was known as the outstanding sheep man of his time. He introduced new breeds to build up high-grade flocks. He counted his stock by the thousands; he proved the feasibility of large scale operations.





**The unveiling of the Boggsville monument on Highway 101—May 3, 1946.**

Mr. Prowers was the first man to go into the cattle business on a large scale in all this vast area; but, more than that, he was the man who made the test, who proved that the country was adapted to the cattle industry. This gave to Colorado, and all the West, her second major industry. It was at Caddoa that his small herd grew into a larger one; but it was at Boggsville that cattle raising developed into big business.

The climax came when the people of Boggsville pooled their interests

and dug a seven-mile-long ditch for irrigation. The first in Bent county. It tapped the Purgatoire above the settlement, and led its waters to the thirsty land below. The fields smiled back with abundant harvest, proving that irrigation was the key to successful farming in Colorado. In the next fifty years men were digging ditches everywhere, following the lead that had been made at Boggsville.

Boggsville never grew to be a town. The fates were against it. It was not on the beaten path of the Santa Fe Trail. When the railroads came through they missed it.

In 1873, when it seemed likely that there was to be a West Las Animas, Mr. Prowers made haste to move. To get a good start he took Mr. P. G. Scott with him.

On August 1, 1877, Thomas O. Boggs and family left Boggsville and moved to Springer, N.M. The reason for this move seems to have been dissatisfaction in his land title. The affairs of the Vigil and St. Vrain Land Grant became complicated, and titles were considered unstable. It was not until 1877 that Washington finally got the matter straightened out. Mr. Boggs then had a chance to dispose of his holdings. He passed away at Clayton, N. M., September 29, 1894, at the age of seventy years. Mrs. Boggs lived until January 13, 1906.

On September 1, 1887, Mr. Boggs sold his ranch at Boggsville to John Lee for \$13,000. Mr. Lee was a bachelor from Boston. He made extensive improvements on the ranch, making the house and the yard an attractive residence. He had R. G. Dalton of Las Animas build a watertank on a tower so that he could water his lawn. His home was his hobby. He became known as the "Gentleman farmer" of the San Patricia Ranch.

Mr. Lee became popular with the social set of Las Animas. He often invited them to his home for their social gatherings. Sometimes they came without asking and put on a surprise party. There they danced through half the night and supped of his bounty. The lists of the elite at those parties contain the names of some we know to-day: Miss Ada Moore, W. E. Culver, R. S. Lambert, Geo. W. Powell.

On March 1, 1898, Mr. Lee leased his ranch to Allen M. Lambright and went back to Boston. The Lambright family lived on the ranch for eight years. Since that time there have been a few changes in ownership and quite a few changes in tenants but the house has been occupied continuously.

On the ranch, Mr. Lee's chief interest was livestock. He had 800 cattle, high grade Herefords and Galloways. He himself took an active part in the farm work. When he wanted to go to town he went afoot straight



across the fields, refusing every chance for a ride, because he wanted to walk.

Mr. Lee married in Boston. He passed away January 18, 1906. The estate passed to his wife, Anna Lee. In 1909 she sold her holdings to The Crebbin Investment Co. of Denver. This firm used the ranch for feeding sheep for a number of years.

## CHAPTER VI

# Mr. E. R. Sizer

## THE FATHER OF THE CULTURE OF ALFALFA IN THE ARKANSAS VALLEY

A man who won honor for himself and brought fame to the Boggsville area, as well as to all the Arkansas valley, was E. R. Sizer who came to the Purgatoire in 1865. On July 10th. of that year he laid claim to 320 acres of land where Adolph Hansen now lives. That was before there was any settlement at Boggsville, the town that was to be four miles east of the Sizer ranch.

E. R. Sizer was born on a farm in New York state, February 26, 1833. His schooling consisted of only four terms. In 1852 he left home and headed West, stopping here and there to engage in one kind of work after another. In the spring of 1858 he outfitted for a trip to California. At Fort St. Vrain on the Platte he met Kit Carson and Colonel St. Vrain. They persuaded him to stay in Colorado.

Together, they went west and stopped on Cherry Creek, (about where Denver now stands) and set up camp to trade with the Indians. Sizer was still there when gold was discovered in Gregory Gulch. That spoiled the prospective trip to California for him. He forgot all about the west coast and spent the next five years in the mountains prospecting for gold, but he didn't have much luck. Perhaps he didn't stay long enough in one place. In California Gulch he missed finding the lode that made H. A. W. Tabor rich. He tried the San Juan country and passed it up for Arizona and New Mexico.

In New Mexico he did some freighting for the government. On one trip his train of fifteen wagons was attacked by the Indians and burned. His oxen were stolen. Then he quit the mountains and came back to Colorado to settle down.

At his ranch on the Purgatoire, four miles west of Boggsville. he looked around. There wasn't a house in sight. The isolation would be

unendurable and he couldn't stand it. The spirit of the wanderer seized him again and he was gone.

He went to General William J. Palmer, who, as head of a corps of engineers, was surveying the right-of-way for the Kansas-Pacific R.R. With him he got a job as guide and interpreter. Before the year was up he met a fair lady, Miss Mary Savage. They were married before Christmas. That tied him to the ranch.

His experience on the farm during his boyhood years came to the rescue in his new venture. He took to agriculture like an old hand. He tapped the Purgatoire for irrigation water; he plowed a large acreage; then he planted.

Mr. Sizer was fortunate in having as one of his acquaintances a congressman from Colorado. This man sent him seeds from the government's supply. With the seeds came instructions for their use and, at the end of the season, he was to report to Washington on his success or failure with each variety. In this way the administration hoped to test out the new country and find out what crops would grow best.

Mr. Sizer was diligent to the extreme in his new undertaking. He was really running an experiment farm under government patronage. While growing vegetables and melons he was experimenting in fruits, including strawberries. He furnished Mr. G. W. Swink some of the seeds used in the extensive experiments in melons, conducted at Rocky Ford. Mr. Sizer was the first man to raise grain in Bent County. In fruits he had plums, grapes, cherries. There were 1,700 apple trees of 26 varieties. He had 6,000 shade trees. For the first few years it seemed that his orchard was going to be a success. He frequently brought samples of his fruits to the office of the Las Animas Leader for exhibit.

In the home, Mrs. Sizer was busy too, always watching out for Indians. Sometimes she wouldn't see them until they were peeking in the window. A branch of the Santa Fe Trail, from Fort Lyon to Trinidad, ran past their home. For a time, their house was a mail station. One day, among the passengers she entertained, was the Duke of Somerset, a member of Parliament. At another time two young lions came into her back yard. They had wandered down from the mountains, but that was as far as they got. After they had been shot several people from Las Animas went out to see them.

Mr. Sizer proved to be an all around farmer. He had about 75 acres of corn in a season. In one of their raids the Indians drove off most of his stock and ruined the best of corn. That was in 1868 when the worst of the Indian raids were nearing an end.

Mr. Sizer's interests in experiments and his phenomenal success



came to the attention of officials in the department of Agriculture at Washington. They called on him to do experimental work in the growing of alfalfa.

Alfalfa is a native of Chili. It came to the United States through California, about a hundred years ago. There it got off to a poor start. The Californians were busy digging gold, and scarcely had time for other interests. In 1877 it was grown only in small patches. One man in Placer county had two acres which he cut four times a year, getting a total of eight tons.

On July 5, 1877, there was an article in the Pueblo Chieftain on alfalfa, the new grass crop in California. The editor suggested that a hay crop that grew well in California might be a good thing for Colorado too, where soil and climatic conditions were quite similar.

Officials in the Department of Agriculture became interested immediately. Eager to promote the development of Agriculture in the West along right lines, two men were chosen to do experimental work. Mr. Sizer was to represent southern Colorado, and a man near Denver was appointed to do similar work for the northern part of the state. With the seed came instructions for sowing and growing.

Under Mr. Sizer's careful handling the culture of alfalfa was a success from the beginning. He had good soil with ample water, and the bright sunshine contributed to luxuriant growth. It seemed that a new discovery had been made; something that would prove to be one of the foundation stones for the founding of a rich agricultural empire in the West. It would, in the future, produce more tonnage, richer in feed values, than any other plant.

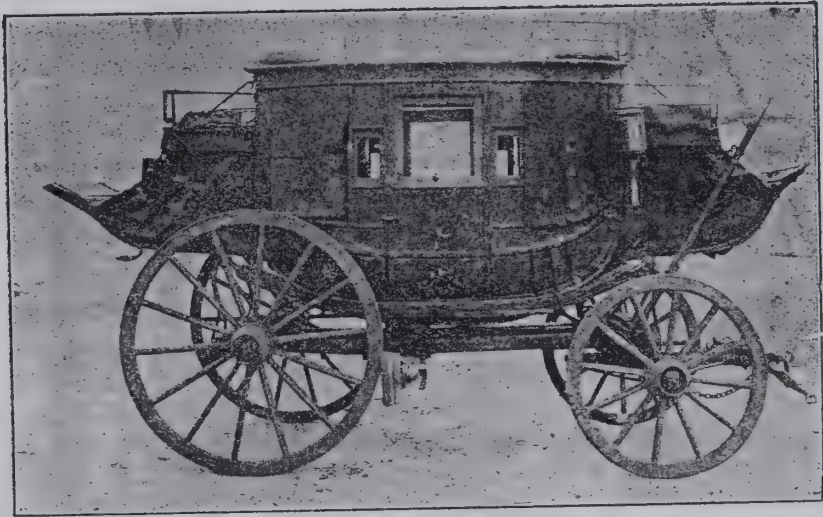
Mr. Sizer was highly delighted with his new crop. The success of his experiments was soon known all over the state; and that's how Bent county and the Boggsville area came to fame for their contributions to agriculture—one of the first, and most important industries, of the state.

Mr. Sizer's fruit farm finally proved a failure. Frosts came out of season and other disappointments entered in, proving that this was not to be a fruit country. However, his chief delight was his alfalfa; that was his contribution to posterity. To the end of his days, alfalfa was his favorite topic of conversation.

## Woman's Life On A Ranch At Boggsville

(When Fort Lyon was moved to its present location in 1867, the Lamberts gave up the agency of the Barlow-Sanderson Stage Line at the old Fort Lyon, and moved to a ranch on the Purgatoire, about four miles west of Boggsville. We will let Mrs. Julia Lambert tell her own story. Editor)

"My husband built a house of adobe, laying up the walls two feet thick, four rooms in a row, Mexican fashion. Two of these were bedrooms, with a fireplace in each. All the walls were plastered with mud and the floors were made by filling in dirt, wetting and pounding it until it was smooth and hard, then plastering over the top. The roof was of dirt too.



**"The Horace Greeley Coach." Long in service on the Overland Trail into Denver and ridden by Horace Greeley the time he came west and founded the City of Greeley.**

"The house was situated on the bench land, high above the river bottom and out of the timber. Back of the house, about three hundred yards, was a rocky bluff from which we had an excellent view of the surrounding country.

"When my husband first took up this ranch the large trees on the place held the bodies of Indians, wrapped in skin and bound to the large branches, high up from the ground so that nothing could reach



them, but when the Indians saw that he was making preparations to stay there, they came and took the bodies away.

"To make a home eight miles from the Fort, in that wild country, seemed a great undertaking, but we had so much stock that it took a large range to feed them, so four families made up their minds to live as close to each other as possible, braving the dangers, and we were one of the four.

"When our house was finished we found it very comfortable, except in time of wet weather. When it rained clean water outside it rained muddy water inside. General Penrose sent my piano to me from the Fort. Then we were ready for company.

"The ladies often came from the Fort. They would come in the morning and stay all day. These visits were very pleasant but as the summer advanced we were not able to exchange visits because of the Indians, who were getting very bold. They came around the house a couple of times and we were obliged to treat them kindly, not daring to show any fear. I took my child in my arms and went into my bedroom, trying to keep out of sight. There was an Indian, on horseback, looking at me through the open window. My heart sank and it took me days to get over the shock. The visit lasted only thirty or forty minutes, but it seemed hours to me. The men gave them little things to eat and they finally left.

"Wild fruit, such as grapes, plums, currants and elderberries grew abundantly on the bottom-land along the river. There were three varieties of currants—black, red, and yellow—which were very nice for making jelly, jam or wine. The grapes were excellent for jelly and wine. The plums, yellow and red, were large, considering that they were wild. They made nice jelly, butter or preserves. About a mile below the house was a grove of elderberry trees that produced abundantly.

"The best picking in wild plums was about twelve miles above us, along the creek. One Sunday the men took a team and a light ambulance and spent the day picking plums. When they came home they had three wash tubs full. Now what was I to do with so many plums? I had only a few jars and none could be bought. Louie, the Frenchman, was a blacksmith, and a handy man too. He went to the Fort to find cans and get whatever else he could. Then he clipped tin and soldered until we had cans that would hold our precious fruit.

"I did not have any kettles that were hotel size, so I scoured my wash boiler, in the same manner as I did the cans, and used that. Louis helped me, soldering, while I cooked and filled. In the midst of it all, a man rode up to the door and shouted, "The Indians are coming."

"Then all was excitement; provisions were brought in from the store house. The copper cartridge shells must be wiped. There was everything to do, but no time to do it. The rider went on, warning everyone along the river. This was September 8, 1868, a date that will always be remembered in the history of Boggsville, for what the Indians did that day.

"As we had the only adobe house between Boggsville and Nine Mile Bottom, the families began coming in. By ten o'clock that morning there were seven women, twenty men, and eight children of all ages in our four rooms. Beds were made all over the floor. A guard was placed on top of the house and he was relieved at midnight by another. When the worst of the excitement was over and some were sleeping, we returned to our plums and it was one o'clock when we finished. These were my first preserves and I was very proud of them.

"The Indians did not come near us so the neighbors went back to their homes in a few days. The troops were trying to keep the Indians on their reservation in Indian Territory, but they were forever slipping out and away before anyone knew of it.

"On that terrible day in September we lost most of our fine Merino bucks. They were on the range, a half mile or more north of our house. We heard the shooting but could not see what was going on. We thought it was a fight. They did shoot one man and they scalped another, but that will be a subject for another story. The Indians seemed to have their raid planned. They hurried on to Boggsville, where they knew there were a lot of fine horses.

These were trying times and kept me in a nervous strain. Our stock had to be kept up the greater part of the time. The men could not go to the field for a load of corn without part of them standing guard while the rest cut the corn. We were in constant fear lest the Indians slip up through the timber and catch the men in the field. My husband's partner had a ladder made of large logs, well braced, standing on top of the bluff back of our house. From this, with the aid of his spy glass, he could see all over the surrounding country. When the men were obliged to be away from the house he would take his place on top of the ladder and watch for the Indians.

"It had been prophesied by an Indian woman, the wife of a white man, and also by an Indian boy, that the Indians would return in another moon. (This they did). This prophecy made everyone uneasy. There was fear of a general outbreak.

"Then we decided to move to Boggsville. Mr. Boggs and John W. Prowers both had large adobe houses, and they had large corrals for stock. There was a general gathering of settlers there at that time.



They came from as far as the Nine Mile bottom, thirty miles away. We were fortunate enough to get a large room from Mr. Prowers to sleep in and we put up tents outside, making ourselves quite comfortable. Others were camping all around, or getting a room where they could. Mr. Prowers had a large store so we were able to get supplies from him. Neighbors kept coming until we formed quite a little company, preparing to defend ourselves."

(The Lamberts moved to Las Animas at a later date and built a large house which now stands at 524 Grand Ave.) Edr.

## CHAPTER VIII

# The Indian's World

Before white men came to this land we call ours, this was the Indian's world. It was a primitive world, made by nature's own hand; and although the Indians had lived here centuries long, they had spoiled it not at all. They were nature's children and knew well that her bounties were their meat. The buffalo, the deer, and the antelope were their food and clothing, and nature provided their keep.

Everywhere he looked, the Indian beheld a wonderful world and he was appreciative of its beauty. The hills and the valleys, the mountains and the plains, were his to roam as he pleased. The tall grass and the forest pine were nature's gift, which she spread before him with lavish hand. All seemed to be designed by nature to be the Indian's own. They fitted in with his nomadic life, offering shelter here, the lure of the chase there, with game everywhere, seemingly sufficient to meet his simple needs.

The Indian accepted the world as he found it; there was no complaining. He might be hungry, he might be cold, but he could keep on smiling where a white man couldn't. If his home was the desert, he accepted desert conditions, and adapted himself to desert demands.

Even the sand hills were a part of nature's heritage to the red man. They were among his favorite haunts. There the giant soapweeds served him well as he hid behind them, hunting bird and beast. The hills gave him a view over a wide range of country where he could spy on all who passed by. In the hollows he set up his adobe, concealed from all others.



**A CHEYENNE INDIAN**

The wooded streams were among the Indian's most precious possessions. They were his life-line. Water to drink was as important as meat to eat. He dug no wells and built no cisterns. In the primitive state nature takes care of her own. The giant cottonwoods furnished shade in summer—in winter, firewood. Here was the best hunting, where game came down to drink. The rivers were well stocked with fish, but the Indian was no fisherman. Wild fruits grew aplenty, where trees furnished protection and where the roots had water to drink. The Indians were careful to not injure the grapevines that climbed the tall trees. There were wild plums, cherries, and berries.

These natives never attempted to improve on nature in order to better their plight. They dug no ditches and planted no trees. Wherever they were, they adapted themselves to the surroundings, and were contented.

In the buffalo country, on the great plains, hunting was their chief occupation and the chief delight of their adventurous lives. And, as the buffalo was a migratory animal, the Indian became a wanderer too, following the herd south each year and back again. If drouth brought short grass to some sections the buffalo sought greener pastures, and the Indians went along.

The Indians of this immediate territory consisted of four tribes. North of the Arkansas were the Cheyennes and the Arapahoes. South of the river were the Kiowas and the Comanches. In central Kansas, north of



the river were the powerful tribe of the Pawnees, hated by all other Indians. In the Rocky Mountains were the Utes. The Apaches ranged the Colorado-New Mexico border.

The Cheyennes were the Indians most intimately connected with the early history of Boggsville, Las Animas, and Bent County. In numbers they were about 15,000. They ranged the vast territory from the Arkansas to the Platte. Their favorite camp site was in Big Timber, twenty-five miles east of Las Animas. These Indians were noted for their power of endurance and for their bravery in battle. "It is one of the marks of their greatness that wherever the Cheyennes went they made staunch and lasting friendships."

Of what meat did the Cheyennes eat that made them superior?

Of all the west, they had the best: rich soil and a sunny clime; abundant grass and wooded streams, free from marsh and malaria; land well stocked with buffalo, deer and antelope. Here—in the Garden of Eden nature cradled, clothed, fed, and sheltered the Cheyennes, peers among red men. Here they grew large, brave, strong and self-reliant—rich in all that makes for primitive contentment".

The Arapahoes were the intellectuals among Indians and they were generally friendly towards the whites. They were not numerous. On this account, we find, that they were generally allied with the Cheyennes for mutual protection.

The Comanches are said to have numbered about 12,000. They were cruel, treacherous, and noted for their bravery. They are said to have never been interested in taking male prisoners, but they were accustomed to carrying captive women to their lodges.

The Kiowas were among the most hostile and turbulent of the plains Indians. Their treachery knew no bounds. The Kiowas and the Comanches were the best horsemen of the plains. The Kiowas were a small tribe, and they allied themselves with the Comanches for self protection. In most cases, every Indian tribe hated every other tribe, and each was enemy to all others. Only for protection were bonds of union held between them.

It was true of all Indians that their fighting propensities forever prevented them from becoming a numerous people. The casualties of war were continually thinning their ranks, taking their "braves," their best.

The Indian's bubble burst when white men came on the scene in such numbers as to threaten his dominion. From the beginning it was evident that the two races could not live side by side. Their differences were bound to lead to trouble. It was to be a clash between two civilizations that could not be avoided unless the white man was willing to re-

spect the hereditary rights of the red men, and this he was not willing to do. Offenses came on the part of the natives but the white men were the chief offenders. In the 40's and 50's of the past century many a man from the States came West, with the avowed purpose of shooting Indians, which he did as light heartedly as he would shoot a rabbit.

Up and down the Arkansas Valley, William Bent, the owner and operator of Fort Bent was the Indian's best friend. He was always fair to the white man, but, as long as he lived, he championed the red man's cause. His wife was a Cheyenne woman, and he knew Indians as few others did. He was always interested in them and their welfare. He did his best to protect them from the evils that the white men brought with them. He knew that liquor would be a curse among them, and he sought government aid to prevent its being sold to them.

William Bent bewailed the Indian's loss of his country, his home-land, and he fought against it. It was his contention that all this western country was designed by nature to be the perpetual range of the red men. He did not think that the hard soil, with its light rainfall, would ever be fit for cultivation and it ever could be made to support a white population. Bent's idea of the arid west was supported by practically all of the early explorers Pike, Fremont, Gunnison.

In 1820 Col. Dodge with about twenty men came west on a government exploring expedition. They went as far as the mountains, going up the Missouri and down the Arkansas. He reported that the country was no good; that it was unfit for cultivation and was uninhabitable for a people depending on agriculture. It was fit only for the Indians. This report was given widespread credence, and was printed in the school books. In 1825, the maps showed the country west of the Missouri as "The Great American Desert" and designated it as "Indian Preserve." This term covered the vast area extending from Texas to Canada and from the Missouri to the mountains.

Historians have reported that Major Long's report delayed the settlement of the West for a quarter of a century. "Until the end of the Civil War there were but few settlers on the great plains, the "American Desert" having baffled the pioneers".

The conflict between the whites and the red men was long and furious, but it may be briefly told. It culminated in the Chivington massacre on Sand Creek, November 29, 1864. Then, maddened by that outrageous affair, the Indians determined on a war of extermination against all whites. The white man had an answer to that. He took the Indian by the ear and led him captive to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and told him to stay within the bounds of the reservation. The loss of his domain and the confines of the reservation broke his spirit. That's the end of his story.



## EARTH WISDOM

By Gene Lindberg

I seek no quarrel with any man  
Who calls himself American.  
Although the plains, once black with game,  
These hills, were mine before he came.

Though I have cause for words of hate  
I speak them not. It is too late.  
But there is time to voice a plea  
For that which once belonged to me.

My prairies, with their grass-bound soil  
No drought or windstorm could despoil.  
I left them as I found them—wild,  
Their ancient beauty undefiled.

My mountains: Well I knew the use  
Of uncut pine and living spruce.  
My streams in summer did not shrink  
While forests gave them snow to drink.

I give you now, before I go,  
Earth-wisdom that all men should know.  
My land—preserve it while you can.  
You are the next American.

Voices of lament are heard in his behalf,  
“He never had a chance”. Humanitarian principles were not used in dealing with the Indian problem. They were set aside for the time as not being expedient.” General William J. Palmer, one of the great men of his day in Colorado, was a broad-minded man but his ideas as to how best handle the Indians were no better than those expressed by others of his time. He was heard to say. “Fight them vigorously and civilize them later”.

The Indian has gone, and the romantic age went with him. He was an obstacle in the line of civilization's march and had to be pushed aside, regardless of his rights and his suffering. Fate is sometimes cruel.

The Indian knows its true,  
And it's to our everlasting shame,  
That all was beauty here,  
Until the white man came.

## THE TREATY OF 1825

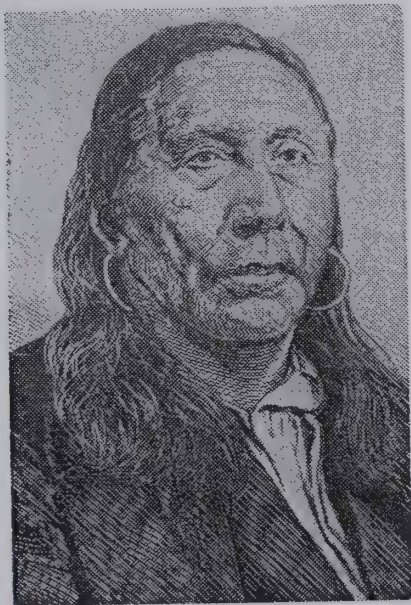
"At last the "Great American Desert", as it came to be named, seemed to call on us to halt, and a permanent Indian policy was evolved which contemplated forming the plains into a vast reserve for the red men in 1825."

"In that treaty Congress pledged that in the country west of the Missouri, the Indian would be protected, and that the country, covered by the treaty, was secured and guaranteed to them for all time. Within a few short years white men found lead in the hills and had to go in after it. That led to a long line of aggressions that ended in war. The whole theory of the desert as a reserve for the natives, quietly broke down and disappeared."

### CHAPTER IX

## Big Chief of the Arapahoes Was "Little Raven"

"Little Raven, Chief of the Arapahoes, was a leader among Indians of his time. He frequently camped in "Big Timber" on the Arkansas, in the days before the Sand Creek affair of Nov. 29, 1864.



LITTLE RAVEN

White men, who knew him and visited with him, came to respect him. They admired him for his stature, his manly form, and his trustworthy face. He couldn't speak their language, and they couldn't speak his; but both knew well, the spirit of the other. Some have acclaimed him their ideal of an Indian.

Little Raven was a man content. Of gold, he had none; but he counted his riches in horses and squaws. He had thirty of one and seven of the other.



## What Did We Burn?

"What did we burn?"

We burned what we could,  
and we left what we couldn't on the ground.

Mrs. Elsie Biggs, whose son is a leading druggist in Las Animas, came here from Illinois in 1887. She came by train, arriving in the night. In the morning her eyes beheld a strange world.

"The first thing I saw was a quarter of beef hanging high on a pole. I learned that it kept fresh up there without salting, in the pure air, as long as it lasted. The coyotes came around at night but all they could get was the smell. Their cries were hideous.

"Our first home was a small adobe house on a ranch far from the river. All was open prairie, miles of it, not a tree in sight. It looked like we didn't have any neighbors; it seemed to be a land of cattle—there were thousands and thousands of Texas longhorns.

"There were no wells in the country and we had to haul water, a barrel at a time, from the lake where the cattle watered. It was clear but not very pure. The cattle drank first, and soaked their feet.

"When John was after the first barrel of water I began to wonder what we were going to do for wood to burn. Well, we did just as the other settlers were doing. We took a sack and gathered up plain cow chips, but my, I hated to do that. We finally got used to it. They made a good fire, kept us warm and cooked our victuals. We had to keep a supply stored up in the dry, for use in time of rain. In winter, the snow might cover them deep and we would be out in the cold.

"The first summer was very dry and we didn't raise anything. All the men in the neighborhood had to get out and find work, when they had used up what supplies they had brought into the country with them. John went to La Junta and got a job with the Santa Fe railroad.

"In 1895 we moved to Las Animas and bought eighty acres of land four miles west of town from Rufus Phillips. There we built a stone house, had water for irrigation, and well-water to drink. We had neighbors too.

"In community affairs, we finally got a school started. At present it

is known as the Melonfield school. Our next want was a mail route. The petition had to have a certain number of names before we could get mail service. We signed up all the babies and got the route.

"When we came to Las Animas there were no fences, except along the railroad. The range was open. The cattle rambled all over and there were lots of them. I have seen as many as 16,000, in one herd, go past our house.

"Our first years in Colorado were in a dry period. Many of the settlers quit the country as soon as they found out how dry it was. Some of them stayed long enough to prove up on their claims; then drew as much money as they could on them and went back East.

## CHAPTER XI

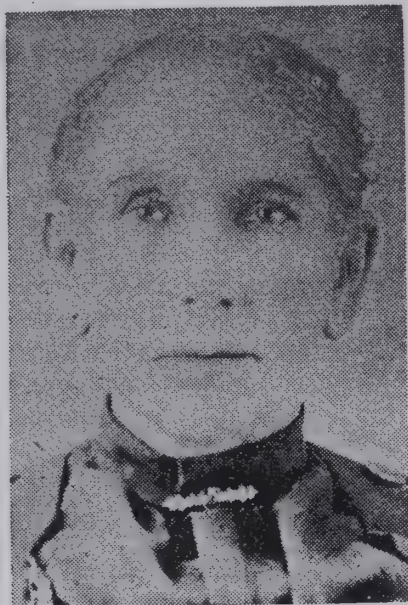
# A Tribute To The Pioneer Women

Mrs. Nancy Gilman's name does not appear in the annals of the state but posterity would be the loser if the story of her life was lost forever. She came early and lived long through the formative years of the new empire. She was of sturdy stock, could endure hardship without complaining, and was a leader wherever she went; a worthy example of the pioneer women of her age.

In the fall of 1864 a train of a hundred wagons was traveling up the valley of the Platte headed for Denver. In it rode the Williams family, with their daughter Nancy. The young lady was alert to all that was new and was not perturbed when she saw an Indian nailed to a tree. She did not know the story of the Indian at that time but she was to hear about it later.

All unknown to her was another wagon train, one day ahead and in it was Henry Gilman, a young man who was her husband-to-be. His train had been attacked by Indians. No one was killed except one Indian. His body was nailed to a tree, as a warning to other Indians.





**MRS. HENRY GILMAN**

From Denver, the Williams family hurried on to Beaver, Colo. to be with a daughter, the well-known Mrs. John Palmer, who lived on a ranch at the mouth of Beaver Creek, midway between Pueblo and Canon City. Nancy's memories of her travels on the Platte include the consternation she experienced when the family awoke one morning and found a dead Indian under their wagon. No one knew how he got there but he was evidently one of the victims of a fight they had with the Indians in the evening before.

Henry Gilman stayed in Denver about a year then moved to Pueblo to become an Indian Trader. He made frequent trips to Canon City to trade with the Utes. At that time everyone stopped at Beaver for lunch and to feed the teams. Miss Williams was there and the sparkle in her eyes sealed his fate. They were married in Canon City in 1867.

They lived in Pueblo where they ran a hotel and restaurant. This is said to have been the first real restaurant in the settlement. It was located where the union depot now stands. Business was dull following the Civil War years and the Gilmans decided that Pueblo never would amount to anything. Then they got a chance to trade the hotel, lots and all, for an eight-hole (hotel size) cook stove, and started out to hunt a new location.

Across the river from Fort Lyon, Captain Craig was promoting a settlement which was to be a winner. He called it Las Animas City. The Gilmans moved in and established the first hotel in the settlement. This was in May 1869. Four children were born to the Gilmans at Las Animas City—Fanny, Frank and Shake. The fourth one, a girl, died in infancy and was buried at Fort Lyon.

By 1877 Captain Craig's castles came tumbling down and most of the citizens moved to West Las Animas. The Gilmans moved to Meadows, where Prowers station now stands. Henry cut wood for the Fort and hay for the travelers on the Trail, while Nancy taught school. This lasted until February 26, 1878, when they sold their ranch to John W. Prowers. Then they moved to Barton the Fred Harvey (XY) ranch.

In the period of a very few years they moved to Coolidge and back to Granada. In each place they were hotel keepers.

Mrs. Gilman was a horse trader and when her husband would go away in the morning he never knew what horses he would find when he got back. On one of his trips to Las Animas he bought a new Stetson hat, a new saddle, chaps, spurs and a bridle. When he got home Nancy knew that he didn't need all that stuff as he already had a good saddle. One day, soon after that, when her husband was away, a Texas trail herd came along and she sold the whole outfit to the boss for \$100.00.

Mrs. Nancy Gilman was typical of the best pioneer woman. To know her would give one a vision of the best of womanhood in the West. She was forceful and courageous. The neighbors and settlers, far and near, were her friends. She was popular as an entertainer. An annual event was her "Bean Bake" on Decoration Day, when the Civil War veterans and everybody else came from miles away to decorate the graves, then listen to the band concert and, at noon, gathered in her yard for a feast.

## CHAPTER XII

# When Two Boys Entertained A Stranger

The Woods family came to Boggsville on March 20, 1873. There were nine members in the family, and the boy Tom was only nine years old.

Kit Carson, the end of the Kansas-Pacific Railroad, was as far as they could get by rail. An uncle, P. S. Jones, one of the senior partners of the famous J. J. Cattle Company, met them there with a big wagon and they all piled in. They were to live in Nine Mile Bottom, but their new six-room adobe house had not been finished, so Mr. Jones took them to his home as a temporary place of abode.

In later years when Tom was telling of his boyhood days in the new country, he recollected the names of the settlers as P. S. Jones, S. F. Jones, J. C. Jones, "Uncle Jesse" Nelson. Then there was J. W. Robinson who ran a store and kept a barrel of whiskey for sale. "Dutch" John was a cowboy on the J. J. ranch and claimed to be a German of noble birth. Theodore Gussoin, a Frenchman, later became a first commissioner of Bent county. John Carson was a nephew of Kit Carson. Captain Voce lived in Voce canyon and had a private ditch for watering his own land.

There were no fences in the country at that time, but they were not needed as no crops, except patches of garden, were being grown. Raising cattle was the only industry and cattlemen didn't care for fences.

Tom's older brother, Guy, spent the winter of 1875 in Kuch Camp, southeast of the Nine Mile Bottom, remaining there alone, from December 1st until March 1st, caring for cattle. Then Tom stayed with him for a while. The only light they had at night was candles, which they made themselves. The boys usually went to bed about dusk to save on the tallow.

One night, soon after the boys had retired, a stranger rode up to the cabin, and after riding entirely around the building two or three times, called out and asked for accommodations for the night. The boys took him in and made him welcome, although they were somewhat frightened. As he came in, they saw that he carried a veritable arsenal of guns and revolvers. The stranger was 25 or 30 years old and was very dark complexioned. He stayed that night, all the next day and the following night. He slept in bed with the boys as there was only one bed in the house.

The visitor proved to be an agreeable person with a pleasing personality, but he didn't talk much about himself. The boys couldn't understand what his mission might be, especially when they looked at his guns. He remained, a half-feared, half-welcome guest.

In the morning, when he got ready to ride away, he turned to the boys and said, "Boys, lead straight, honest lives; don't do as I have done, and you'll get along alright." Then he rode away.

Eight years later, the two Woods boys were eating dinner with the cattle outfit to which they belonged. They had as their guests that day the Miller brothers, Ed and Bill, who had just arrived from Missouri.

While they were eating, two strangers rode up and asked if they might eat with them, and, according to custom in the cattle country, they were welcomed in. After they had eaten and smoked, the strangers rode on. Ed Miller rode with them for a way, then returned. That evening he asked Tom if he remembered ever having seen either one of the strangers before. He replied that he did not. Then, when Ed mentioned the time when he and Guy had entertained a stranger eight years before, memory returned. Ed Miller explained to him that Jesse James was the man who had visited him and his brother, and that these two men were Jesse James and his brother Frank. They were on their way to New Mexico where they had a ranch.



## **Mrs. Marcellin St. Vrain**

### **THE SIOUX INDIAN WOMAN, WITH BENT, ST. VRAIN AND COMPANY**

The builders of Fort Bent were William Bent, his three brothers, and Ceran St. Vrain. Associated with them in the fur business was Marcellin St. Vrain, a brother of Ceran.

Soon after Fort Bent had been completed and had become well established as a trading post, the Bents and the St. Vrains built a Fort on the Platte, named it Fort St. Vrain, and placed Marcellin St. Vrain in charge. The new fort was built on the same plan as Fort Bent, but it was smaller. It was the second in a line of trading posts, over a wide area, north and south, that would corral the fur trade for the American Fur Company of St. Louis.

In 1840 Marcellin St. Vrain married "Red", an Indian maiden, the daughter of "Red Cloud", famous chief of the Sioux. Three children were born to the St. Vrains—the last one in 1848. Shortly after the third child was born, Marcellin left home and went back to Missouri. The story is told that he killed an Indian and had to flee for his life. Possibly he had reason for leaving home, but probably not. His leaving was shrouded in mystery, and history does not know whether he tired of his family or whether the call of eastern culture caused him to forsake western wilds.

The woman he left behind waited faithfully for the return of her runaway spouse. After two or three years he came again, but he did not stay. He picked up the two oldest children and took them back to Missouri. The young daughter and the mother were left alone, and Marcellin never saw them again, although he promised to return for the rest of his family.

Now, our story is not of furs or forts; neither of fights, nor of fleeing the foe. It's all about "Red", the indomitable Sioux, who contributed mightily to our enlightenment of what an Indian woman could be.

Soon after her husband had left her, she went to Mora, N.M. to keep house for Ceran St. Vrain. Ceran was not like the fickle Marcellin. He was one of the great men that the frontier produced. He was a French-

man, well educated, and a man of culture. It is understood that he never married. He was in sympathy with his sister-in-law, because of her misfortune, and gladly made his home hers. He admired her for the woman she was, and for the red blood that flowed in her veins.



**"Red" the Sioux Indian maid who married Marcellin St. Vrain and came to Fort Bent. Later she married the county judge and lived at Trinidad. She was always highly respected by Indians and white men.**

The trusting wife maintained her faith in her husband for the best part of twenty years, in anticipation of the day when the father of the only child she had left would return to them. Finally she married William A. Bradford, County Judge of Trinidad.

"Red" became widely known in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, where she was highly respected by both whites and Indians. On many occasions she was called upon to act as interpreter, and more than once she acted as peacemaker.

In the years she spent at Fort St. Vrain on the Platte, and at Fort Bent on the Arkansas, she became acquainted with Buffalo Bill, the Indian scout. In later years, when there was much unrest among the Indians and when Buffalo Bill was stationed at Fort Lyon, the old scout made a trip into New Mexico to see "Red", the Indian woman of his acquaintance, to persuade her to go out and hold a parley with the Indians who were gathering in large numbers and were likely to raid the settlement.

She took a Ute Indian with her and went out, otherwise unescorted. When she came back she assured them that there would be no trouble.

A few days later, in the early morning, another band of Indians appeared on the horizon and everyone was very much frightened. "Red" and the Ute again went out to see what they were "up to." About noon they came back, and the Indians with them. They stayed several days in a friendly visit. They were Comanches and were a grand sight, arrayed in feathered headdress astride beautiful spotted ponies.

When the news came of the battle on the Little Big Horn, June 28, 1876, when General Custer and his entire command were annihilated, Mrs. St. Vrain was in great sorrow. As a little girl, born in the camp of the Sioux, she knew many of the chiefs and tribesmen involved in the fight. Then too, as the wife of a trader, she had met most of the men of prominence in Custer's command.

Although this fight was a victory for the Indians, "Red" realized that it was the beginning of the end of freedom for her tribe. She knew that the leaders were pursuing the wrong course. She despised Sitting Bull, and she did not have any use for her nephew, Crazy Horse. But her heart ached for the others of her friends. She saw the helplessness of their struggle against the whites.

At Mora the daughter married and had children. The family made trips to Trinidad about three or four times a year. "Red" went with them and was always sure to take a few sheep pelts along to sell so that she could have a little money to buy candy and ginger snaps for the little ones. She treated them sparingly so that the candy would last until they might get a chance to go to town again.

The last years of her life were spent at Trinidad, where she had a comfortable home. Her husband, the judge, died in 1881 and that made a difference. She mourned the loss and wanted to be alone most of the time. She often started out afoot in the morning and spent the whole day tramping over the hills alone. She was always interested in her family and her grandchildren were the pride of her life. She died about 1886.



## The Baby Left In The Wagon

Strange things happened in the early days, and often came to light in an unusual way.

When the Santa Fe Railroad was building through Caddoa in 1875, Ulysses S. Black was a boy living close by where the road was to be. He got a job as a helper running errands, carrying bolts, spikes, and sometimes drinking water.

The father was proud of his boy and had given him the initials U. S. to encourage him in a military career like that of U. S. Grant. When he was old enough, the commander at Fort Lyon was persuaded to take him on and start the training that would make of him a great soldier. All went well until one morning when he got hold of the bugler's brass horn and played the bugle call that signalled "all out".

That roused the wrath of the commander and he was sentenced to eight days hard labor, carrying water from the river to irrigate the garden. When his time was up, he was discharged and that ended his prospective military career.

He became a railroader, for the Santa Fe, the Rio Grande, and the Union Pacific. He started as an engine wiper and soon became a fireman, then an engineer. The Union Pacific fired him for running too fast. His career ended in retirement at Telluride, about 1950.

Mr. Black lived in one of the most interesting periods of pioneer history. He seemed to always be where things were happening. He knew Calamity Jane, Soapy Smith and Poker Face Alice.

When he was at Caddoa, the hired man was mowing hay along the river. On the north side of the river a woman was walking back and forth. She seemed frantic and was apparently looking for a place where she could cross. The man unhitched his team and rode one of the horses across the river. The woman told him her tragic story.

She asked him to go with her downstream six or eight miles where her husband had been killed by lightning. She and her husband had been ranching some distance above Fort Bent when they decided to quit and go back to Illinois, their old home state. They loaded their few possessions into the wagon, climbed in with their baby in arms, and started down the Santa Fe Trail.

When lightning struck, the little woman hardly knew what to do, but she started out to find someone. She thought that she could get help

at Caddoa. Her team was very weak and she had to walk, leaving her baby in the wagon.

The hired man helped her get her team and wagon back to Fort Lyon, where people gathered around and where everyone wanted to help. The poor woman found that everyone was her friend. After the funeral, the hat was passed. Some contributed generously and about \$400.00 was raised to cover expenses on her way to Illinois.

Mr. Black belonged to the Masonic order and became a popular speaker among the members of that organization. About 1920 he was delivering an address at a Masonic meeting in Trinidad, when he told this story. After the meeting, a man in the audience came forward and told him of a woman living in Alamosa who told a story like this. That aroused the interest of Mr. Black. He went to Alamosa to see her. He told her the story of the woman who came to Caddoa for help, in the days long ago. She listened with tense interest, and, with evident emotion she said, "Yes, I was the baby in the wagon".

#### CHAPTER XV

## The Chivington Massacre

Our short sketch on the most controversial subject in Colorado history does not take account of the causes that led up to the massacre at Sand Creek, except to state that it resulted from a culmination of atrocities and animosities that had been fifty years in the making.

Neither do we make any attempt to show who was most at fault, whether it was the white man or the Indians. This is a plain statement of facts, without fiction. Our information has been gleaned from the pages of history, from the writings of others who knew the story well, and from witnesses of the second generation; men and women whose parents lived in this area at the time of the Chivington Massacre, and had a part in it.

In the early months of 1864 Colorado was almost depleted of her military forces, as all the troops that could be spared had been called east to bolster the Union forces against the Confederates. This left the plains of Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska, wide open for attack. Then the Indians, perceiving the weakness of their foe, renewed their attacks with savage vigor on the settlements, the wagon trains, the stage coaches, and stage stations. They even made an effort to combine the forces of all the tribes in a war of extermination against all whites, and the Sioux were at the bottom of it all.

Fort Lyon was at that time charged with the responsibility of policing

a very large territory, extending a hundred miles or more in all directions, but couldn't do much because of having only a few hundred men.

The Fort had a stage station, a trading post, and a commissary. It was the distributing point for rations which the government was regularly giving to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. There the Indian Agent had his headquarters and it was his responsibility to keep the War Department posted on all things pertaining to the Indian situation.

In the fall of 1864 "Big Timber", the popular hunting ground of the Cheyennes, was not occupied by Indians of any tribe, Major Wynkoop having advised them to move to the open country where they would have better hunting territory so that they could be practically self-supporting. A considerable number of the Cheyennes made camp on Sand Creek, about forty miles north of the Fort and a little east. Some of the Arapahoes were with them. The Cheyennes had a much larger camp farther east, on the Smoky Hill river, not far over the Kansas line.

The government officials directly in charge of Indian affairs consisted of John Evans, governor of Colorado territory, and Colonel M. Chivington in command of the Military District of Colorado. Over them was General Curtis of the Military Department of Missouri, of which Colorado was a part.

As early as the fall of 1863, Governor Evans began contacting the chiefs of the various tribes, asking them to attend a general council at Denver for the purpose of writing a peace treaty and arranging for cessation of hostilities. Nothing came of this appeal. A few of the chiefs were willing to attend the proposed council, but most of them were not. In mid-summer 1864 another appeal was made, with better results. Major Wynkoop accompanied a few of the leaders from Smoky Hill and the San Creek camps. However, but little was accomplished at Denver. The attendance was light and the few who were there were not willing to accept responsibility for the more war-like ones who were not there.

The Council broke up in September and the Major accompanied the Cheyennes back to Fort Lyon. Then he advised them to go back to their camp on Sand Creek, where they would be on their own reservation, and where they would have the protection of the military forces under his command.

About the same time, Governor Evans declared war on all hostile Indians and made preparations for attack. It was his thought that the display of the strong arm would cow the Indians and the conflict would be of short duration. He issued a call for volunteers to serve 100 days, and the men who responded were known as the "100-day men".



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Those who answered the call were ranchers, miners and business men, all untrained. It took many weeks to get enough men together to form an effective fighting force. Then they had to be trained. When that was done there was not enough equipment to go around, so they had to wait for more. By the time the little army of about nine hundred men was ready to move, cold weather had set in. They bogged down in 20 inches of snow at Pueblo. There was danger of running out of provisions, so the commander gave his men permission to go home and stay through the duration of the blockade, if they could get there. Most of the men from as far north as Colorado Springs did so.

All of these delays contributed to dissatisfaction and unrest among the troops. The 100 days would soon be up, nothing done yet, and they would not want to serve longer. Finally the roads opened up and a fresh supply of provisions arrived.

On November 25th they started down the Trail. Their day began with a 4 o'clock call and they were on the march before daylight. Chivington delegated men to contact every settlement and every ranch house along the way and instructed them to pick up every able-bodied man, so that none would be left to warn the Indians. Among those taken in charge were Robert Bent, from near Rocky Ford, and John W. Prowers, with seven of his cowboys from Caddoa.

The Colonel and his men arrived at Fort Lyon on the evening of November 28, 1864. Captain Anthony was in charge, as Post Commander, since Major Wynkoop had been called east. Captain Soule, with a company of Colorado volunteers, was a part of the garrison. Colonel Chivington at once assumed command. He spent some time telling his officers of his mission. He told them that they were to be a part of his army on the march to Sand Creek, and instructed them as to what he expected of them when they got there. "They were not to take any prisoners". Two of the officers, above mentioned, raised protest in behalf of the rights of the Indians, but their objections were quickly suppressed, with threat of having their uniforms taken from them.

About 8 p.m. Chivington and his army started for Sand Creek. The troops he had brought with him into Fort Lyon included a company of Spanish Americans from New Mexico. These, with the Fort Lyon garrison, swelled the total to a little over a thousand men and they had two cannon. It took them all night to cover the forty miles. Alternately they walked, then trotted, arriving at the camp as the sky was getting light in the east.

The number of Indians in the camp is not definitely known. Best authorities place the number at 600 or more, men, women and children. There were several chiefs, and, over all, was Chief Black Kettle who had the

United States flag flying over his teepee. John Smith, the interpreter was there too. He was a squaw man. His two half-breed boys were killed in the fight.

All was quiet in camp when the troops arrived. About a thousand ponies were grazing on the hills to the west and north. The Indians were deep in their slumbers. All was ripe for a surprise attack. Chivington sent men out to capture as many of the ponies as possible for his own use, and to prevent the Indians from getting away. Then the shooting began.

The surprise was complete. The Indians rushed out of their teepees bewildered, unarmed, helpless. Some tried to run. Most of the men came out to fight with what weapons they had. Some had good guns; others used their bows and arrows. It was a one-sided affair, and the Indians saw that they were beaten. Some of them mounted their ponies and escaped in the direction of Smoky Hill. Others sought protection among the willows in the creek, and worked their way down stream toward the Arkansas. Still others hid under the banks of the stream, and prepared to fight from pits in the sand. The women came out with their babies in their arms and begged for mercy, but there was no mercy. Some of them, while pleading with uplifted arms, were stabbed in the breast, and their babies were pierced with bayonets. The Mexicans became frantic at the very start, laid down their guns, and used their knives.

Chief O-Kinee, whose daughter was Mrs. John W. Prowers, led his wife, and a few others, down the creek and when they had gotten far enough away so that their escape seemed assured, he himself returned to play the part of a true Brave, and die, if necessary, with his people. That was the last of him.

The carnage continued until mid-afternoon. Then Chivington ordered his men to burn the teepees and contents. All camped there that night and next morning started for home; some following down the creek bed in search of Indians and others going direct to Fort Lyon.

The death loss is not known. Some writers estimate it as low as 128. Others make it several hundred, mostly women and children. Chivington lost about twelve men. Most of them died of arrow wounds after they had reached Fort Lyon.

It's a matter of record that Captain Soule, with his entire command, refused to participate in the attack on the Indian village, after they got there, and saw what kind of an affair it was going to be. They were silent witnesses to all that went on through that day. A few months later, when it became known that the government was going to hold an investigation, the Captain was shot by an unknown assassin on the streets of Denver. It is any one's guess as to why he was shot.

Chivington was proud of his day's work. When he got back to Fort Lyon he telegraphed to Denver that he had attacked the Cheyenne village of 130 lodges and nearly a thousand warriors, had killed chiefs Black Kettle, Knock Knee, and Little Raven, with between 400 and 500 other Indians. Our loss was 9 killed, 38 wounded. All did nobly.

The attack on the Indians at Sand Creek did not have the effect that it was supposed to bring. It maddened the Indians more than it cowed them. They decided that there was no mercy in the white man and that he knew not justice. They renewed their attacks, and committed worse ones than had ever been known before. Charlie and George Bent, sons of William Bent, went with them and were their leaders. They were known as "dog soldiers" and were worse than the Indians themselves.

The story of the Sand Creek affair spread rapidly and divided people into two groups—those who upheld Chivington in what he did, and those who condemned him. Interest became so intense that the government at Washington called for an investigation, which was held in the spring of 1865. Many witnesses were called, among whom were William Bent and Kit Carson. The Commission decided that the Sand Creek fight was a most deplorable affair. Colonel Chivington was defrocked.

The Commission attempted to make amends to the Indians who had suffered the loss of relatives at Sand Creek by giving them cash and chattels and by awarding them tracts of land which they might choose for themselves. They picked the choice spots, on both sides of the Arkansas between Sand Creek and Rocky Ford. These appear, on the maps of that time as Indian Claims and are numbered consecutively.

The people of Bent and Prowers counties have always felt the injustice of the attack on the Indians at Sand Creek who had been promised protection. Las Animas has been particularly interested because one of her leading families stems from Amache, who was one of the chief sufferers. Long years, after it was all over, Mrs. Mary Hudnall, the oldest daughter of Amache and John W. Prowers, was in Denver attending the Festival of The Mountain and Plain. When in the capitol building a lady rushed up to her and said, "Mrs. Hudnall here is Colonel Chivington. I want you to meet him." The Colonel held out his hand but she refused to shake hands with a man who had been the murderer of her grandfather, and her people.



## The Rescue of Laura Roper

In the late summer of 1864, when some of the Cheyennes on Sand Creek came to Fort Lyon to talk over the matter of rations, regulations, etc., they happened to say that they had a few white captives at their camp, which they might be willing to release, if the whites would make it worth while for them to do so.

Major Wynkoop of course was very much surprised and he asked many questions. He learned that there were three women and several children, and that the camp was about a hundred miles northeast of the Fort. That would make it on the Smoky Hill River, over the line in Kansas.

The Major was a man of action, in a case of this kind, and he quickly made ready for a rescue expedition. The Fort was lightly garrisoned at that time, but he would risk taking what troops he had. He took with him Captain S. S. Soule, one Lieutenant, an Indian half-breed interpreter, and a small company of cavalry; also one piece of artillery. They were a brave lot, and those left at the Fort were anxious for their welfare, not knowing what the Indians might do when the soldiers came upon them.

After many days, they all returned bringing with them Miss Laura Roper, two little boys, and the five-year old daughter of a Mrs. Eubanks who herself had been sold to a tribe of Sioux Indians.

On reaching the Indian Camp Major Wynkoop asked Chief Black Kettle for a peace council. This was granted and the chiefs formed themselves into a circle. The three officers, headed by Major Wynkoop, walked into the circle and disarmed themselves by handing their guns to an orderly. That left them in a perilous position but they went through with it.

By the terms of the council the captives were given to Major Wynkoop in return for supplies from the Fort, which would be delivered to the Indians when some of their number came after them.

Captain Soule brought Miss Roper to the home of Mrs. Julia S. Lambert, whose husband was the operator of the stage station at the Fort. To her she told the story of her capture.

"I lived on the Blue river in Kansas. One Sunday I went to visit a neighbor, Mrs. Eubanks, a short distance from my home. When I started for home, Mr. and Mrs. Eubanks were going with me part way, for a walk. She carried her baby in her arms and Mr. Eubanks was leading the little girl by the hand.

"We were going through a patch of timber when we heard Indians yelling behind us. The little girl began to cry, and Mr. Eubanks took her off the road into the bushes to hide. He stuffed his handkerchief into her mouth so tightly that she couldn't cry. We were all under cover and kept very quiet. Mr. Eubanks had just taken the handkerchief from the child's mouth when the Indians came again, searching for them. The child let out one yell and that was enough. They killed and scalped Mr. Eubanks, leaving his body where it fell.

"We were then put on horses, with our hands tied behind our backs. I had on a hat, which an Indian took and put on his own head. He led the horse I was on and started off toward the houses of some neighbors. A woman who was simple minded lived in the first house. She was so crazed with fright when the Indians came that she tried to fight them, scratching and biting them. They shot her and took two boys with them, each about nine years old. Bound on our horses we had to witness these terrible things. They led my horse past the woman's body. She was not dead yet for, as I passed, she crossed one foot over the other.

"We had only gone a short distance when the Indians who had stayed to mutilate the bodies came riding up. As they passed me, the woman's bloody scalp of long, beautiful black hair, was slapped into my face, covering it, and my dress down the front with blood. Then the flies attacked me and the next day I was one crawling mass of maggots.

"We traveled west almost night and day. Four days we were in the hot sun. I was bareheaded, my hands tied behind my back; it was impossible to brush the crawling maggots off my face.

"When we reached camp, I was taken to the tent of Chief Black Kettle. His squaw let me go to the stream where I took off my dress, washed it and bathed my face which was one mass of blisters. I was now the property of Black Kettle to do with as he saw fit—submit or be killed—A girl of seventeen, alone with beasts. They could hardly be called human. There was no respect or regard for sex among these barbarians. I was kept a prisoner by Black Kettle's squaw. I have no idea of what Mrs. Eubanks suffered as we were kept apart. When she was sold to the Sioux, her baby was taken from her and given to a squaw.

"I had no idea what part of the country we were in, so there was no possibility of escape. One woman tried it, only to be recaptured and brought back after a chase of some miles.

"The loathsome manner of living and the indignities I was subjected to almost drove me mad. I knew that there were other white women in the camp. One night one of them took off her calico dress, tore the skirt into strips and twisted them into a rope with which she hung herself to the lodge poles. They took me in to see her body hanging lifeless. I

never knew what was done with the corpse. Thus I spent four months in the camp of the Indians.

"There was great excitement in camp when word was brought in that the troops were coming. The Indians seemed to be afraid that the Soldiers would try to take us by force. The Chief handed his squaw a big knife and made motions that she should cut my throat.

"I was so overjoyed when I saw the soldiers coming into camp that all I could do was to cry, and when I was turned over to the officers I could not speak, but I was very careful to keep close to them on the trip to the Fort."

When Miss Roper arrived at the Fort, all she had on was her dress and a pair of moccasins. The dress was the one she wore when she was captured and it was torn to rags. Everyone at the Fort wanted to do something for her. They gave her clothing and she was welcomed into all the homes. The boys who were rescued with Miss Roper were in the same plight. The ladies bought goods at the Suttler's store and made it into clothing for them. The little Eubanks girl soon died. She was a frail child and the hardships of the camp were too much for her. The boys were taken to Denver, and from there they were sent to the homes of relatives in Kansas.

What happened to Mrs. Eubanks is not known, except that she testified in 1865 before one of the commissions appointed by the government to investigate the Sand Creek Massacre.

In spite of the sympathy which the ladies of the Fort showered on Miss Roper, she was crushed in spirit and so humiliated because of the indignities she had endured, that she did not want to meet people, and she did not want to talk to anyone.

She could not get word from her people in Kansas and did not know where they were—whether they were alive, or had been killed by the Indians. The people of the Fort took up a collection, bought a ticket, and gave her money for a trip to relatives in Pennsylvania.

## CHAPTER XVII

# Mrs. Lynn Is Captured By Indians

The settlement at Boggsville was made sad in October, 1868, when a neighboring ranch-woman and her child were captured by the Indians and carried far away.

Mr. and Mrs. Lynn, with one child, had been living on a ranch on the west side of the Purgatoire, a little beyond the home of E. R. Sizer



and six or eight miles from Boggsville. They had a call from relatives in Illinois to go back and take care of the old farm. So when they had a chance to join a train of twenty wagons, going in that direction, they went along.

On their first night out, the Lynns camped in front of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lambert. The other wagons that would make up the train were being assembled at Boggsville and they all started out early next morning. They had chosen the south side of the Arkansas as their route so that they could have good grass and keep their teams in good condition. The Commander at the Fort had refused them an escort and advised them to not go that way as it was too dangerous. They had better go the Kit Carson way and follow the line of railroad being built by the Kansas-Pacific Co., where there would be more travel and where they would have better protection.

The caravan had been gone only two or three days when the Indians raided Boggsville again, killed one old Mexican herder who was working for Mr. Prowers, stole a few horses, then headed east along the Purgatoire and down the Arkansas; following the trail that had been taken by the caravan.

Then everyone knew that the Indians would be likely to follow the fresh trail of the wagon train and kill everyone. Their fears were confirmed when a wreck of a man crept into Boggsville very early one morning and knocked at a friendly door, "Can I come in?"

Poor "Greasy George" was as much dead as he was alive. Hunger and exhaustion had almost gotten him down. His friends gathered around and he told them the story.

The Indians overtook the wagon train so quickly that there was no chance to prepare for defense. Mr. Lynn told his wife and little girl to hide under the feather bed. They did so, but it didn't do any good. The Indians waved their blankets and stampeded the teams—the wagons upset, some broke down, and one fell in the river.

Mrs. Lynn and the child were pulled from their hiding. Her screams were terrible. The men shot at the Indians but were too far away.

The men gathered and succeeded in getting four wagons together in the form of a square. Then they shoveled dirt, piling it up under the wagons for defense. They had succeeded in saving one mare and they had her in the square with them. There they stayed four days, besieged. At night a man would crawl to the river for a little water. They could not have any fire and had to eat bacon raw.

On the first night Greasy George led out the mare and started for Boggsville, but he had not gone far when he saw Indians ahead of him

so he went back. On the next night he made it. He rode sixty miles to the Fort, notified the commanding officer, and then came on to Boggsville.

In about two hours the troops were on their way and the cavalry reached the men that night. Two wagons and a guard followed later.

As soon as the Indians had found Mrs. Lynn, a part of the band took her across the river and went into camp. They were keeping a sharp lookout on the hills round about, and they broke camp about two hours before the soldiers arrived.

The wagons bringing rations were a welcome sight to the famished men. Mr. Lynn was almost wild over the fate of his wife and child.

In the morning the cavalry crossed the river to the deserted Indian camp and found a card on which Mrs. Lynn had written a few words to her husband, imploring him to try to do everything to rescue them. She must have had the card and the pencil in her pocket, as in those days no dress was complete without them.

The cavalry followed the Indians down the river to where their trail went south, but having no guide and not being familiar with the country, they turned back, fearing ambush. They picked up the ten men, and whatever personal effects were in the wagons, and went back to the Fort. One of the ten was badly wounded. He was put in the hospital and taken care of. The other men went on to Boggsville. Their wagons and teams were a total loss.

Mr. Buttles of Fort Lyon corresponded with educated half-breeds at Camp Supply, Indian Territory, trying to find and ransom his sister Mrs. Lynn. They wrote that they could get her for \$5,000, but no less. He was unable to raise the money at that time. The Indian camp was moved and nothing further could be heard of her or the half-breeds. Mr. Lynn, despairing of ever hearing from his wife, went to his mother in Illinois.

A few years later, an officer's ball was being held at Fort Lyon. Lieutenant Wallingford was there. He had been with a command when they charged an Indian camp in Indian Territory. After the battle they found Mrs. Lynn's body. She had been shot in the head. The bosom of her dress was filled with roughly made biscuits. Near her at the foot of a tree, lay the child. Her head had been crushed. Evidently an Indian had taken her by the feet and smashed her against the tree. The two bodies were buried together where they were found.

## Tragedy On The Trail

Mrs. Snyder's coming to Colorado, and her tragic experience, took place in the summer of 1864, when travel on the Trail was most dangerous.

Mr. Snyder, a blacksmith at Fort Lyon, had sent to the States for his wife. She was to come to Denver and he would meet her there. The officers at the Fort were interested and were pleased at the prospect of having another lady to join in their circle. The quartermaster let him have a small ambulance, with four mules and a driver for the trip.

He met her in Denver, as scheduled, and they traveled the stage route to Pueblo. The next stop was at Booneville, twenty miles farther east, where Col. A. G. Boone ran the Post Office and a stage station for the Barlow-Sanderson Stage Line.

When the hack stopped at the stage station, Aunt Eliza, the old colored woman who had lived with Colonel Boone's family for many years, came out to greet them. At sight of the fair lady she exclaimed, "You all got a mighty fine head of hair for the Injines to get, honey".

The little traveler was tired and that frightened her. She screamed, "Oh, don't say that, for I have heard such terrible stories of how they treat their prisoners".

The next stop was at old Fort Bent, where the stage from Santa Fe met the stage from Denver and the two consolidated, going to Fort Lyon which was thirty-five miles farther east.

The next west-bound stage from Fort Lyon came upon the hack. The two men had been shot and scalped, and there was no woman. One of the wheel mules had been shot in order to stop the carriage. The Indians had taken the other three mules. It was easy to see that there had been a woman in the party as articles of her clothing were found strewn around.

Soldiers from the Fort were called and they followed the trail of the Indians in hot pursuit, but the Indians had soon scattered and all trace of them was lost. Everyone wondered how a woman, alive, could be gotten away so quickly and so completely lost to civilization.

Miss Laura Roper gave the answer a few weeks later, when she came out of the wilds, and told of the golden-haired woman who had hanged herself in the camp of the Cheyennes on the Smoky in Kansas.



## CHAPTER XIX

# Bent County Divided

When Fort Bent was being operated as a trading post, the men who lived there usually gave their mailing address as Fort Bent, K.T., meaning Fort Bent, Kansas Territory. Colorado had not been heard of then and Kansas Territory extended from the Missouri river to the mountains. It was not until 1861 that the territory was divided and the west part organized as Colorado Territory.

In the first division of the territory into counties, Pueblo County extended east to the Kansas line and there was no Bent County. In 1870 the legislature decided that Pueblo County covered too much territory, so a dividing line was drawn about twenty miles west of where Fowler now stands, and the territory east thereof was named Bent County.

Bent County, in its original confines, was 110 miles long and over eighty miles wide. The legislature made a few changes in its boundary lines by adding a little territory on the north and by taking away some in another place, as the best interests of the country seemed to demand. It was not until 1889 that the county was trimmed to its present size.

Colorado changed from a territorial to a state government in 1876. With that change, and the rapid increase in population, came a need for a re-drafting of county lines. This culminated in the late eighties. The people of this community became very much interested at that time because of the demand made by the citizens of Lamar for the creation of a new county, in which their town would be the county seat.

The matter was carried to the legislature where it became the leading issue in January 1889. The result was that Bent county was divided into six parts, as nearly equal as could be, and named, Bent, Cheyenne, Otero, Kiowa, Prowers, and Lincoln Counties.

## CHAPTER XX

# Fort Bent

The story of Fort Bent begins in 1828, when Bent Bros. and Ceran St Vrain were occupying a stockade on the Purgatoire. They had been in the country about two years, a little farther up the Arkansas, in the foothills. Their time had been spent in trading with the Indians, getting acquainted with them, and in scouting the country to learn what its resources in furs might be. It is said that they came to this area in the interests of the American Fur Company of St. Louis.

They had found that the hill country was not the best for a permanent location. Their mission to the Purgatoire was to scout around in the plains country and decide on a suitable location for a trading post, where skins and buffalo hides might be plentiful and which would be of easy access to the Indians.

While they were on the Purgatoire a friendly band of Cheyenne hunters came along and stopped to visit. They were much interested in the traders and in what they were trying to do. They told the campers that they were in about the right place, as this was in the best of the buffalo country and, here important Indian trails crossed, leading east, south, north, and west.



**Excavation at Fort Bent, made in 1954. The Fort was built in 1828-32, and abandoned in 1849. For twenty years it was civilization's center, in all the West.**

The site they choose was twelve miles west of the present Las Animas, on a knoll bordering the north bank of the Arkansas, which gave a good view of the country in all directions.

Construction was begun in 1828. On the ground, the structure was 135 by 180 feet. The walls were made of adobe, mixed with coarse wool from Taos, N.M.. They were fifteen feet high and three feet thick at the base. At two of the corners were round watch towers, which were about sixteen feet in diameter, inside measurement, and were seven feet higher than the side walls of the structure. There were twenty rooms. Some

of these formed a second story along the north and the west walls.

The structure was built strong for stability and for defense and, according to the custom of the times, it was called a fort. It never was attacked by the Indians and there never was occasion for it to be used for military purposes, except as a base of supplies for the United States forces during the Mexican War.

The building was not completed until 1832. The work had hardly gotten a good start when smallpox broke out, having been brought in by the Mexicans who came from Taos to make the adobes. William Bent sent the Mexicans home and sent messengers to the camps of the Indians, warning them to keep away until the danger of the plague had passed.

As soon as the fort was finished big business began. The Santa Fe Trail was becoming a great trade route and the fort was popular as a stopping place for rest, to mend the harness, and fix the wagons.

Fort Bent was much more than an ordinary trading post. It was larger than any of the others and did more business. William Bent had a big advantage in the fur trade because of his marriage into the tribe of the Cheyennes. No rival could successfully compete against him in all the vast fur-producing region.

The Fort was an institution. It housed an isolated community. There were normally sixty employees, and sometimes a hundred. It was home to the trappers, as well as hotel for travelers and strangers. For a period of twenty years it was civilization's center in a vast territory that extended from the Missouri river to Santa Fe. There was nothing else quite like it in all the West.

As a social center it had no rivals. There was meat to eat, in plenty, and all were well entertained. Ceran St Vrain, a Frenchman of culture and dignity, always sat at the head of the table. The guest lists contained many notables—Marcus Whitman, General Grant, Santa Fe merchants, many prominent explorers, and famous scouts.

The employees at the fort included household attendants, hunters, freighters, and traders. In the fall of each year traders were sent out to visit the camps of the Indians, often going as much as two or three hundred miles. Each one had wagons loaded with goods that the Indians needed, and others, such as trinkets etc., which they did not need but which they craved. In the spring they would return to the fort, their wagons loaded with a wealth of furs.

William Bent always tried to be fair with the Indians. He probably did not pay big prices for what he got from them, and their furs brought big money in St. Louis. The fur trade made him immensely rich.



One of the big events that took place at the Fort was the arrival of General Kearney and his army of 1,800 men in July 1846. They were headed for Santa Fe and this was the beginning of the Mexican War. The army was followed by 400 freight wagons, mostly carrying goods for trade in New Mexico. It seemed that all the world was on the move.

Kearney stopped at the Fort to rest his men, who had become weary of marching through the heat of the dusty plains. He had a number of sick men and he arranged for their care in a temporary hospital. Then he arranged to make the Fort a base of supplies for the duration of the war. Next he asked William Bent to go with him as chief scout, to point the way and help keep the peace with the natives. That's where Mr. Bent got the title of Colonel. On August 3rd the long columns of troops crossed the river at the Fort and were on their way as the army of invasion.

In 1848 the cholera broke out on The Oregon Trail, also on the Overland Route. The death loss was very heavy and resulted in travel on the trails being greatly reduced. William Bent, desiring to keep his Fort clean, practically closed the doors and went to St Louis, where he stayed all winter. When he returned in 1849 he learned that his wife, Yellow Woman, who had been at Fort St Vrain on the Platte, had returned to Fort Bent and had brought the dread disease with her. That angered the Colonel very much. He loaded his wagons with his furniture, and everything else that was loose, and moved forty miles east.

The report spread that Mr. Bent blew up the fort when he abandoned it but that is not true. Ranchers, stockmen, and bankers in La Junta and Las Animas attest to the fact that it was still intact many years later.

The span of the Fort's existence as a trading post lasted about twenty years and that period is known as the "Golden Age" in the West. During that time the Indians prospered, and the white men too, under the patronage of William Bent. The Indians were peaceful and always ready to do his bidding. Because of his marriage among them, they called him Chief. They respected him for his friendly spirit and his honesty. He was faithful to every promise he ever made to them. At the Fort, and in the country round about, William Bent had a little kingdom all his own, and in that kingdom he reigned supreme.

A century has passed and the adobe walls of Fort Bent have gone but they have left us cherished memories of life that was as rich in romance as the frontier ever witnessed anywhere.

Fort Bent made two significant contributions to posterity. During the twenty years of its existence, William Bent succeeded in keeping the Indians under his control, thus making it possible for white men to

come into the country and make the beginnings of settlement peacefully.

Secondly, Fort Bent was a way-station on the Santa Fe Trail that gave encouragement and protection to trade with New Mexico. That trade was the main element that finally led to the conquest of the great Southwest for the U.S.A.

In both cases, Fort Bent during the years of its existence, was the peer of all other forts and trading posts in the West. Its passing represents the parting of the ways between the Indian's world and the white man's civilization. In his first contact with white men, under the tutelage of William Bent, the Indian showed his possibilities for good; but in later years, after the passing of the reign of William Bent, he showed what a devil he could be.

## CHAPTER XXI

# Fort Wise

When William Bent came down from Fort Bent with his loaded wagons in the fall of 1849, he stored his goods in his three log cabins that stood in "Big Timber". Then he went into the far country, to Fort St. Vrain on the Platte—then to the Cimarron country. He returned to Big Timber in the fall of 1852, and put several men to work, getting rock out of the big hill for the construction of another fort. He spent the winter of 1852-53 in the Apache country.

The building of the fort began in the spring of 1853 and it was finished in about a year. This new Fort resembled Fort Bent, except that it was built of stone instead of adobe and it was smaller. It was 200 feet long, north and south. The width was 100 feet. The walls were sixteen feet high. There were thirteen rooms and a patio. The entrance was to the north. Its location on top of the hill gave a grand view of the river and all the country around. A hundred feet to the south flowed the river, where a man could drop a bucket on a rope and get his drinking water.

New Fort Bent was operated for about a year much the same as the old Fort had been but the volume of business was much smaller. About 1853 the government appointed an Indian Agent to look after the welfare of the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, the Kiowas, and the Comanches. His headquarters was at the new Fort. It was the duty of the Agent to keep in touch with the four tribes and report on their behavior to Washington. It was also his duty to distribute annuity goods which the government regularly furnished to the four tribes.

The first and one of the best of the Indian agents at the Fort was Mr.

James Fitzpatrick who began his new duties with great enthusiasm. He realized that the day of the Indian as a wanderer was coming to an end and that some more stable way of life would have to be devised for him. He wrote to Washington a glowing account of what he hoped to do. He thought that he could teach the Indians to be farmers and that he would have all of them self-supporting in a very few years. Alas, Fitzpatrick soon found that an Indian did not know how to hitch up a team. He never learned to drive a team because he couldn't and he never did any plowing because he wouldn't. The best efforts of Mr. Fitzpatrick, in agricultural lines, came to naught.

In 1855 Mr. Fitzpatrick passed away at the Fort and his successors were employed in the following order: Robert Miller, Colonel A. G. Boone and William Bent in 1859. Then came Captain Cooley. Some of these men, particularly William Bent and Colonel Boone were Indian agents of a high order, but some of the others exploited the Indians and made them more vengeful.

In 1859 William Bent was named Indian agent. This would seem to have been the best appointment that could be made but Mr. Bent gave up the position after about a year. We do not know exactly why he did so but his plea was that it was because of poor health. In the year 1859, he leased the fort to the government and he then gave all his time to freighting.

In 1860 the government occupied the fort, as sole owner, and changed the name to Fort Wise. The Bent building on the hill was used as a commissary and it was fortified. In August 1860 six companies of soldiers (600 men) arrived and on September 1st began building new quarters, sufficient to house a thousand, or more.

The building material was rock taken from the big hill. Most of the new buildings were put up in "Big Timber", in the low-lands close by the water's edge, about a half-mile west of the hill.

The first buildings to be put up were the stables. There were five of them, each 250 by 150 feet, with walls nine feet high and two feet thick. The men's quarters came next and the officer's quarters were built last. There were six buildings for company's quarters, and twelve for officers, a hospital, a guard house, a bake house and a laundry. The rock was hauled at the rate of 165 loads a day and most of the work of construction was done in six weeks. On January 1st. a terrible blizzard swept over the country and the soldiers greatly enjoyed the comfortable quarters they had built with their own hands.

Fort Wise never suffered an Indian attack, although danger seemed near in 1864. Then it was that Major Wynkoop and his men threw up an outer wall around Bent's Fort on the hill. The need was so pressing that the men worked feverishly and the women helped. They carried



water. The remains of that wall are plainly visible today.

Along the west base of the hill ran a ravine, the east side of which was used as a burying ground. Holes were dug into the west bank, for use as ammunition dumps.

The reservation that surrounded the fort was officially established on August 8, 1863. It contained 38,000 acres. On June 25, 1862, the name of the fort was changed to Fort Lyon.

One of the best commanders at the fort was Major Anthony who was in charge through most of the year 1864. His efforts on behalf of the Indians were on a par with those of James Fitzpatrick and William Bent. W. H. Ryus, a stage driver, said of him, "Major Anthony, the Commander at Fort Wise, was such a rare character that, if he had his way about it, there would be no war."

In the spring of 1866 torrential rains covered the country and the Arkansas became a raging torrent. At the fort its waters overflowed its banks, rose high in the new buildings and ruined most of them. The commander reported to Washington on what had happened, advising as to the gravity of the situation, and insisting that it was time to move.

Six months later, in the spring of 1867, the troops loaded their wagons with all available equipment, including tools, and moved to the present site of Fort Lyon, where they at once proceeded to build a new fort. The old fort was officially abandoned June 9, 1867.

The old fort had been in existence during stirring times—through the worst of the Indian wars — and its annals cannot be contained in a few pages; its story cannot be told in a day.

About five days after the Sand Creek Massacre some soldiers found an Indian woman with a baby in her arms, on the prairie north of the fort. She seemed crazed for want of food and was suffering from the cold. She scratched her captors and tried to bite them, acting as much like a wild animal as a human being. The soldiers took them to the fort. The woman seems to have died there. The child was adopted by one of the army officers.

## CHAPTER XXII

# Fort Lyon

Fort Lyon is the last, in a line of four forts that began with the building of Bent's stockade on the Hardscrabble in 1826. The first three were established as trading posts for the gathering of furs. All four were established for protection from the Indians. The last of the line came

to an end when the buffalo had vanished and when the Indians had been subdued and led away to Indian Territory.

Those were trying time in the middle sixties. The Chivington Massacre had not settled the Indian problem, but only made it worse. The Indian was more confused than he had ever been before. In his way of thinking, there was no honor among white men. The promises of protection on their reservation at Sand Creek proved to be a trap for their slaughter. They were maddened and would never listen to terms for a peace treaty again. In vengeance, they determined on doing all the damage they could. One band of 1500 Indians attacked and destroyed three successive wagon trains.

The plains country did not have adequate military protection. The nearest military post to the east was Fort Larned, about 240 miles away. To the west was Fort Massachusetts in the San Luis Valley. The situation on the Arkansas was serious and the government decided on building up Fort Lyon and making it strong enough to police all the open country for several hundred miles in all directions.

As soon as weather permitted, in the spring of 1867, General Morey moved to the present site of Fort Lyon with 400 men and began the construction of the new fort. Through the summer and into the winter, the fort was pretty much of a tent town and there was considerable suffering in the cold weather. The administration building, a large barn and many other buildings were built of stone. The buildings in officer's row were made of adobe. The specifications called for buildings enough to house 4,000 men. The work was about completed by the end of 1868.

The winter of 1867-68 was a tough one. The snow was deep and the cold was severe. The worst of it was that traffic on the trail had become unusually heavy, swollen by the lure of gold in Colorado and in California and urged on by demands of trade in Santa Fe. Travelers suffered severely that winter from the snow and the cold, but that was not all of it. The worst was the danger of being murdered by Indians.

The government attempted to do all it could to protect traffic on the trail by sending armed guards with the stage coaches, but there were not enough men available to adequately protect the wagon trains. Finally the government forbid any train to move between Fort Lyon and Fort Larned unless it had 300 fighting men. Any eastbound train that did not have that many men was tied up at Fort Lyon until additional wagons arrived and could be O.K.ed by military authorities. In the same manner, the west-bound trains were held at Fort Larned.

At one time Fort Larned had 400 wagons and as many other vehicles, most of them loaded for New Mexico, and all of them waiting for orders to move. At the same time there were several hundred wagons detained

at Fort Lyon.

In the tent town there was not much that could be done during the cold winter and the men had considerable trouble in keeping warm. There was no coal, wood was scarce, and the cowchips were under the snow.

In the first few years of its existence new Fort Lyon served well the purpose for which it was built. In a limited area it made the country somewhat safe for settlement. In a much larger way it policed 400 miles of the Santa Fe Trail. It was often called upon to send troops to distant points where danger lurked. On October 25, 1873, the commander sent one company to Fort Wallace in Kansas for the winter. On May 6, 1874, two companies of cavalry were sent to Two Buttes to prevent the Indians from making raids out of Indian Territory. On December 12, 1875, two companies of cavalry were sent to protect Trinidad, where the Indians were getting restless. Most important of all was the effect that the building of the Fort had on the Indians—in the display of “the strong arm”.

Fort Lyon was officially opened on June 11, 1867, when General Penrose moved his headquarters from the old fort to the new. The reservation covered nine square miles, extending across the river into the sand hills.

For the first few years of its existence Fort Lyon was not an unpleasant place to live. The houses were comfortable and the grounds were planted with trees. There was always something going on. There was drill every day and the band played every evening. Every once in a while a company or two of the troops would be sent to other forts in the territory and other troops would arrive to take their place. There was a variety of entertainment—ball games, races etc.—designed to keep up the morale of the soldiers. Some of the bands that were sent to the Fort were really outstanding and were in demand for entertainment at Pueblo in March, 1876, when the big railroad celebration was being held for the Santa Fe.

At one time the garrison included a company of colored cavalry and when they went on parade they were a grand sight. The horses were black, as well as the men. They were well trained and were about the proudest troops that appeared on the parade grounds.

From time to time some interesting visitors came to Fort Lyon. On July 23, 1876, Count Radocki of Austria, a brother of the Emperor, spent the day there. In August, 1876, the Wheeler Expedition (explorers and surveyors) spent a few days there, outfitting at the trading post. On July 30, 1875, appeared Navajo “Tom”—“Big Injun Me”.

In the late eighties, when the Indians were quiet on their reservations



in Indian Territory and ceased to give trouble in the Arkansas Valley, Fort Lyon had served the purpose for which it had been built. On August 31, 1889, a telegram was received from Washington stating that Fort Lyon had been ordered abandoned. The soldiers were sent to other points. The equipment and supplies were sent to Fort Logan. The buildings were left vacant with a single caretaker in charge.

The vacation period lasted for seventeen years, until 1906, when a gang of workmen was sent in to repair the buildings and prepare them for rehabilitation. That was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Fort Lyon.

#### CHAPTER XXIII

## The Romance Of A Cheyenne Maid

The history of the Prowers family is only half told when we come to the life-story of Mrs. John W. Prowers, one of the most interesting matrons of Boggsville.



Mrs. A. O. Hudnall (sitting) with sisters, Mrs. Ida Mae Hopkins, Mrs. Inez Lambert Comstock, daughters of Amache, the Cheyenne Princess.

When John W. Prowers came to New Fort Bent in 1856, at the age of eighteen, there were no white women in the country. Men who were here from the east had been reluctant to bring their wives with them, as this was no place for a woman.

Soon after his arrival, he met "Amache", a Cheyenne Princess, the daughter of Chief Och-Kenee. On his part, it was a case of love at first sight. She was the most beautiful girl that he had ever seen. She was only thirteen years of age and very shy. She was conscious of the young man's glances, but she knew not of his love, and she cared not. She was busy with her dolls and did not have time for other interests, especially marriage matters.

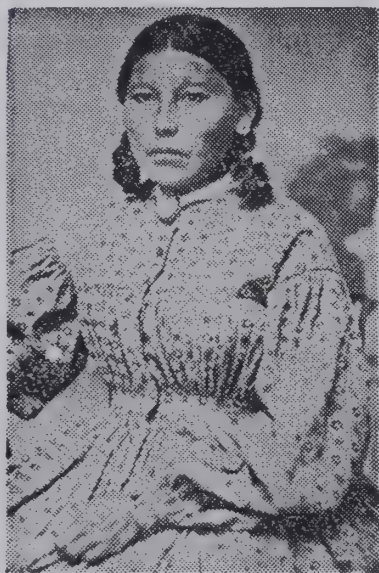
Months rolled by, more than twelve of them, and the young man did

not seem to be making any progress in winning the maid. He was getting desperate. Then he sat down to analyze the situation and he realized that he was hampered by the strict discipline of the parents and, if

he was going to win the affections of the princess, he would have to win the father first. The code of the Cheyennes was strict in matters of matrimony, and all courtship must be carried on in the presence of the girl's parents.

In this case, the chief and his wife were pleased at the prospect and were anxious that their daughter be reconciled to her suitor. The young white man, fair of face, and of graceful figure, stood high in their esteem. Soon the exchange of gifts began and the case was sealed. Many items of Cheyenne bead-work were given, as tokens of admiration for the comely trader with the pale face. Amache made some of them with her own hands. The climax came when the Chief presented him with a fine spotted horse.

The marriage ceremony was an elaborate affair and took place at Camp Supply, Indian Territory. It was witnessed by friends and a host of warriors, amidst pomp and splendor, perpetuating the traditions of the Cheyennes. The ceremony was to impress on the young man the idea that forevermore he was a member of the great tribe of the Cheyennes.



**AMACHE**

The Medicine Man was the "Master of Ceremonies". With bowed head he prayed to the God of the white man that length of life, virtue and happiness might be the everlasting heritage of the young couple. Then, with upstretched arms, he prayed to the "Great Spirit" of the red men, that he might guide and direct the doings of these young people, protect their marriage through life, and at last gather them to the eternal hunting ground of all good Indians.

Two races met in solemn pact when Mr. Prowers took the Indian maid as his bride. The sophisticated East beyond the muddy Missouri had leaped the bounds of the frontier and mingled with the West. The two joined hands in sacred pledge, each bringing to the

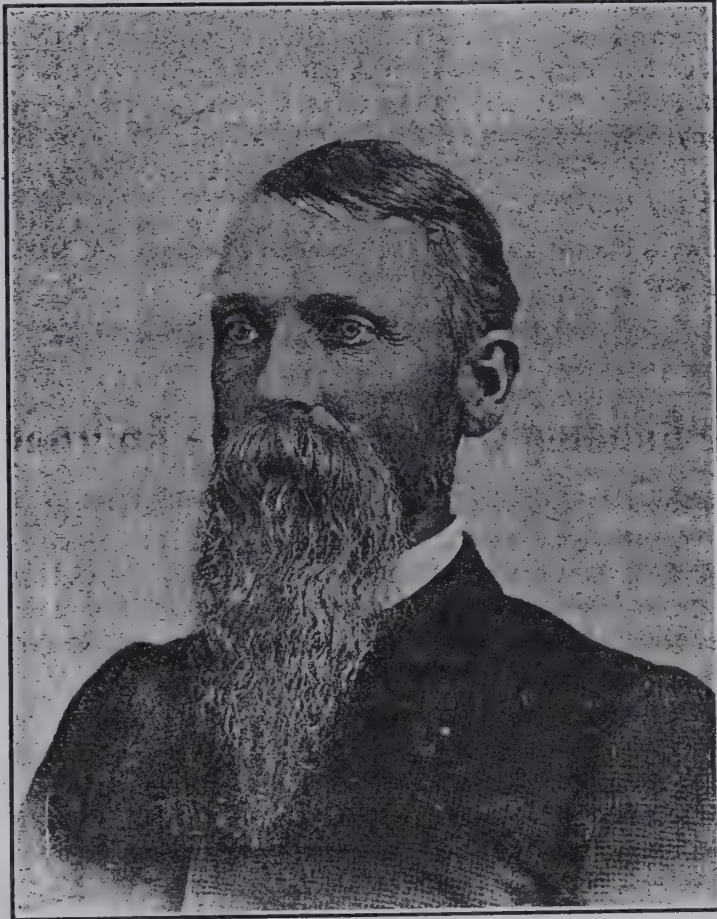
other the best of the traditions they knew.

Amache was a worthy representative of the proud Cheyennes. She realized the seriousness of the step she was taking, when she moved from her teepee to the white man's couch. She was giving up her own way of life and was taking on the white man's civilization. The trans-

formation was a slow process and it was not easy. She met with some success and many failures. Often her heart ached.

Mr. Prowers proved to be a model husband. He knew of the battle that raged in her breast and he was proud of her. He was always patient and sympathetic, helping with the cooking and other household duties.

Amache's neighbors were her friends. The ladies helped her with her hair, trying to show her new ways of fixing it (which she never adopted). She did not always take to their suggestions in dress. She did not see the necessity for corsets and a bustle was a nuisance. She tried it once and that was enough.



**J. W. PROWERS**

That was when she was in Westport, Mo. Mr. Prowers had taken her with him on a business trip that he might show her to his friends. She



was dressed for a party that was being held in her honor. The hack was at the door waiting for her. As she started down the steps at the front door, her foot caught in the bustle and down she went head first to the ground. The driver rushed to the rescue, picked her up, dusted off her clothes and tried to calm her with consoling words, but he could not heal the hurt that she felt inside. And that was the end of the bustle

At her home in Boggsville, Mrs. Prowers got to be a pretty good cook, thanks to the careful help of her husband. Her prize production was her cakes. Box socials were leading events in Boggsville. The cowboys would ride all day to get there. If they thought that they were bidding on a box packed by Mrs. Prowers, it would bring top prices.

The children of the Prowers family always respected their mother. They honored her for the woman that she was and they were proud of the Cheyenne blood that ran in their veins. On one occasion, when they had company, the mother was in front of the mirror, fixing her hair, when Inez (later Mrs. Comstock) wanted to use it. Jokingly she said, "Get out of my way, you old squaw".

Mrs. Prowers passed away at Las Animas February 14, 1898, at the age of fifty one years.

#### CHAPTER XXIV

## The Building Of The Santa Fe Railroad

The most important event that took place in this area during the nineteenth century was the building of the Santa Fe railroad up the Arkansas Valley. Until that time passenger traffic moved by stage coach; freight was carried in wagon trains; while immigrants with their possessions furnished their own transportation. In either case the service was slow, wearisome, and very unsatisfactory.

In the 1860's Cyrus K. Holliday and others who were observers of the traffic on the trail, and conscious of the great hardships endured by all who took part in it, realized that suffering humanity deserved something better. They were convinced too that the time had come to try out the iron horse on rails that would extend west from the Missouri river. Three railway companies began work about the same time: the Union Pacific, The Kansas-Pacific, and the Santa Fe. The Kansas-Pacific came to Las Animas ahead of the Santa Fe, then backed out. The Santa Fe got here September 13, 1875.

During the two or three years previous to that time, the Santa Fe officials made frequent visits to Las Animas on business, to discuss loca-

tion, right-of-way and negotiating for a bonus. Among them was Albert A. Robinson, chief engineer. For three years he and his men covered this country, running their levels here and there and everywhere. On one occasion, December 17, 1874, he arrived on a Kansas-Pacific train when there was seven inches of snow on the ground and the temperature was thirteen below.

On October 22nd, 1875 construction crews at Las Animas began the work of building the line to Pueblo where they finished February 28, 1876.

The next big undertaking was building to Trinidad and on to Santa Fe. On one of their trips into New Mexico, where Mr. Robinson and his men were doing preliminary work, they were traveling in a buckboard. They stopped at Ocate, N. M., a stage station on the Barlow-Sanderson stage route, for dinner. The proprietor was a white man, but his wife was a woman of another color. The travelers did not find conditions to their liking. The cooking was of the worst sort. Everything was so dirty and greasy as to discourage even the keen appetite of a hungry man. Directly over the table hung a bird cage in which was a live rattlesnake, the landlord's pet. Just as the noonday guests were about to be seated, the owner picked up a table fork, prodded the rattler to make him "buzz", and then calmly replaced the fork by the guest's plate. This was too much for Mr. Wilder, one of Mr. Robinson's men, an office man recently arrived from Boston. He could not eat and had to leave the room. The rest of the party, more accustomed to unconventional dining service, managed to make out a meal.

Mr. Robinson's life was filled with thrills and his difficulties were not always engineering problems. Some of his troubles were native to the frontier; what could not be cured had to be endured. At times he had the human element to contend with and he had to match wits with other men. He could exercise strategy, if need be, and win. In troubled times he always kept sweet. His wonderful personality was a winner.

In February, 1878, the president sent him to Raton mountain to take possession of the pass and hold it for the Santa Fe. Quick work, cleverly executed by him, won the pass against the contending forces of the Denver and Rio Grande Co.

A few days later, in the spring of 1878, the president sent him to Canon City to occupy the Royal Gorge against the forces of the Rio Grande. There was no train going west that night and the president of the Rio Grande refused to run an engine especially for him because of what he had done at Raton Pass.

The plucky engineer was not beaten. He hired a horse and rode through the night as fast as he could go. The horse died under him at

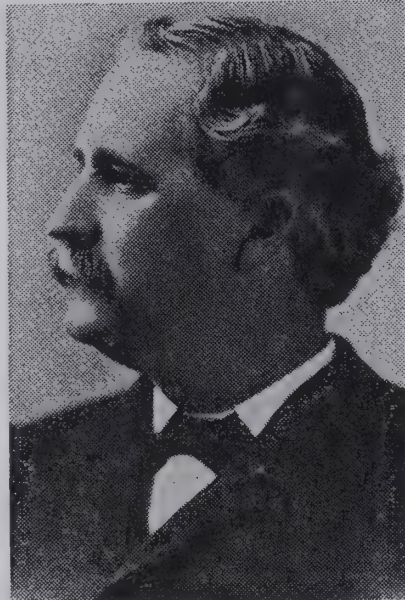
Florence. Then he started out afoot to cover the other eight miles. The contest that followed has become famous as "The Battle of the Royal Gorge." It lasted three days in the field, and Mr. Robinson was the leading figure. The men were armed for work and for defense too. They worked and fought with their shovels. Blood was spilled but none were killed. One engineer was pulled from the cab of his engine. At last the law stopped the fight. Then it was carried to the court where it lasted two years.

During these two years Mr. Robinson designed and built the famous hanging bridge in the gorge. When peace was made the Rio Grande Co. paid \$300,000 for the bridge and for the track he had laid.

In 1887 the Santa Fe officials decided to build the road to Denver. Robinson put her through at the rate of 116 miles in 216 days.

It is considered that Mr. Robinson's greatest single achievement was the building of the Santa Fe line from Kansas City to Chicago in 1887. The distance was 450 miles, with nine miles of bridges. About 7,000 men were at work and they finished the job in eleven months.

Albert Alonzo Robinson was born on a stony farm in Vermont, October 21, 1844. His ancestors for generations back were New Englanders. The father died when he was four years old, leaving the mother with four children to support. After a few years the mother took another husband as help-mate. Then he died and that left Albert as her mainstay, since the other boys had left home. They were then living in Wisconsin. Albert won a reputation as a successful farmer. He could raise more tobacco on an acre of ground than anyone else in the neighborhood. He paid off the debt on the farm, then he went to the University of Michigan to study engineering.



**A. A. ROBINSON**

In 1871 the Santa Fe Railway Co. hired him as an engineer helper. It was not long before he became the head of the department, and before he quit, he had built 5,000 miles of railroad. In this work he was fortunate in having Mr. W. B. Strong, first, as General Manager, and later, as President, to work with. The Robinson-Strong teamwork made the Santa Fe a great system.



A. A. Robinson passed away in November, 1918, at the age of 74. We ponder as to what forces made him great. No doubt the influence of his wonderful mother played a part in his career. Then we look at the boy himself. He always seemed to have a goal. He knew what he wanted to do and what he wanted to be. Success in farming in Wisconsin might have turned the attention of many a boy and bound him to the soil, but not he. When he asked himself the question: "Which way leads to the front?", the answer came back strong, "Take the College road", and there he went.

## CHAPTER XXV

# The Range Cattle Industry

In its day, raising cattle on the range was Colorado's No. 1 industry. It was really contemporary with the mining industry. The two grew up together, in harmony and in co-operation. Each of them had its part in putting Colorado on the map, calling attention of the outside world to her natural resources.

Through the first half of the nineteenth century the civilized world had been told that practically all the country west of the Missouri was a barren waste, uninhabitable, and never would be good for anything.

This idea prevailed until the early pioneers found that the land where the buffalo roamed was good for pasture too. Then the tests of a few years proved that conditions under Colorado skies were ideal for raising cattle on a large scale. In a very short time the herds grew in size and number, and cattle raising as an industry had been launched. Men had learned that Colorado was good for something and it would be something big.

Until after the middle of the century all of this area was public domain. No one was interested in acquiring ownership and there was no price on any of it. If a man wanted to move in and settle he did so. He moved again when he got ready. This led to the story of "Free Range," which was the basis of land tenure on which the big cattle ranches were established. The cattlemen clung to this idea tenaciously until the middle eighties, when the law, backed by the Cleveland administration, forced them to desist.

This was a crushing blow to the ranching interests. Until 1885 it was conceded that Bent county would be an immense cattle range for all time. But, from that time on, the cattle industry declined as rapidly as it had risen, depressed by decline in prices, by drouth, and by the ter-

rible losses in the storms of winter.

The loss of range rights in the middle eighties revolutionized cattle ranching. It put most of the small owners out of business, as they did not have capital for buying land. They sold to the big operators. Many of the large ranches were caught in a squeeze too. John W. Prowers, H. S. Holly, and others, had thousands of acres fenced; land which they could not hope to control under the new order. Washington ordered them to remove their fences, and when they did not do so, the sheriff sent his men to cut the wires between every two posts. However, the loss of range rights was not entirely responsible for putting the cattlemen out of business. It was only the first blow.

The second blow was the drouth. 1885 was a dry year, in the midst of a drouth period. In the early eighties the range had become overstocked and the grass was nipped so short that it could not support the herds that roamed. The cattle grew thin. Then came hard winters and they died like flies.

The last day of December, 1885, dawned bright and warm—a perfect day, but on the horizon in the northwest was a dark streak that was ominous. After noon it began to rain; then it snowed. Toward evening the wind blew strong and it was cold. The big blizzard was on. It lasted ten days, the worst ever known. It came from Canada and went east and south, going deep into Texas.

The cattle could do nothing but drift with the wind. When they came to a fence they froze there. Entire herds perished. One herd of 5,500 cattle lost 5,000 head. The Santa Fe railroad had several train-loads of cattle enroute to Kansas City. They were taken into Dodge City and unloaded. Before morning 75 percent of them had perished in the pens. Nearly a hundred people perished in the state of Kansas. Because of the storm, only three passenger trains from the east entered Denver during the month of January.

The plains were largely swept of their cattle and most of the ranchers were financially ruined. Some thought that the worst was over and those who had credit borrowed money to buy more cattle, but to no avail. The next winter (1887) was worse than 1866 in Colorado. It seemed that fate was against the cattleman and he might as well quit. These storms served as a warning against reckless methods in handling live-stock, and resulted in radical changes in the cattle industry. By 1890 the range country was a changed and chastened region. The "Cattle Age" had run its course. Then the cattlemen joined hands with the farmers, growing feed and raising cattle too. Of course, their operations were on a reduced scale.

## A Cowboy Funeral



A Cowboy Funeral for a rider who drowned when trying to water his horse in the river, south of Las Animas. In the front row, the fourth from the left was known as "bad man number one." No ladies present.



Our space will not permit going into detail in the story of the cow country. In a few lines we will state briefly some of the sidelights that entered into life on a cattle ranch.

Cattle ranching started at a time when there was but little law in Colorado and not much enforcement. As soon as outlaws in the east learned of this condition they hurried West, and the cattle country became infested with them. Stealing cattle was their line, and they became the No. 1 enemy of the cattle industry. Out of this condition came a wave of crime and there was much shooting. Very often, communities, or individuals, took the law in their own hands.

The cowboys on the ranch of Charles Goodnight one day caught a man trying to steal cattle. Not having time to take him to town, which was far away, they hung him in their own stock yards. However, Charles Goodnight was an honorable man. Always, after that, when his men would capture thieves, he would send them to the nearest place where there was a jail.

In Las Animas we have the Bent-Prowers Cattle and Horse Growers Association which was organized in East Las Animas in 1870, and was re-organized in West Las Animas in 1874. It was made up of the cattle owners of Bent County. Their aim was to curb cattle stealing, help in the conviction of cattle thieves, and in general protect the interests of the cattlemen. This is the oldest organization of the kind in the state. It has been a powerful organization, politically, morally and socially. The time was, and still is, when practically all of the livestock owners in the two counties belong to the organization. Their annual meetings are glad reunions where stories are told, and memories of the early days are revived; days when the cattleman was King of the plains.

The heavy losses in stolen cattle made it necessary to employ brand inspectors and detectives. The brand inspectors were hired by the state, but the detectives were employed by the big cattle companies. Two men, who for many years rendered distinguished service as brand inspectors, were J. R. Smith of Lamar and Joe Wyatt of Las Animas. Equally famous in the line was Marcenas J. McMillin of Carlton, Colo. These men were clever in deciphering "sleeper" brands and piling up evidence for the arrest and conviction of cattle rustlers. The crooks knew that if they stayed in the game long enough they would probably be caught by some of these inspectors.

It is generally conceded that the "Cattle Age" lasted for a quarter of a century, from 1865 to 1890. In that short period the West made a showing in the production of cattle and in the accumulation of wealth such as America never knew before. In the first twenty years of that time it was thought that the industry had been permanently established. It

was the most natural economic and social order man had yet devised for mastery of the plains. The country offered ideal conditions, where cattle could graze and grow with but little care; and co-operation in handling among the different owners reduced costs to a minimum. Here it seemed that man was in accord with nature. His was a natural occupation. He used the land in its native state and altered it hardly at all. His weakness was in not recognizing the fact that water and forage were commodities that would need conservation, and that this theory of "Free Range" would explode when the "nesters" came with their plows.

## CHAPTER XXVI

# The British Influence In the Cattle Business

The beginning of the cattle industry on the plains of Colorado and her neighboring states followed closely the ending of the Civil War. Those were trying times in the financial circles of the U.S.A. Big business was at a standstill and there was no money available to help put the wheels of industry in motion. The financial activities of pre-war days had "gone with the wind", crushed and demoralized. Men's hopes were at low ebb. There was need for some great man, some big event, or some titanic movement to spark the nation to new activity.

Across the water, England and Scotland were enjoying prosperity. That was the Golden Age in the British Isles, and London was the money market of the world. Englishmen were becoming interested in the western world. Pennsylvania had struck oil. Colorado had her gold. And, above all else, the best of the world's big game hunting was on the plains of Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado.

America found her counterpart in Britain. Englishmen were looking for an outlet for their wealth and were alert for opportunities to invest in undertakings that might offer substantial returns. They were sportsmen too, and their chief delight was in hunting big game.

Hither they came, to see the country and hunt buffalo. Delighted with what they saw, many of them stayed, some to engage in the cattle business, and others to dig gold.

Those were prosperous years in the cattle business. The first investments paid good dividends. Then both English and Scottish syndicates opened their purse strings again, sending millions of pounds across the Atlantic. Cattle was one of the leading objectives for the foreign investors. And, in almost every case, they wanted to do business on a

big scale. Their money went into most all the large cattle companies in the country: The Prairie Cattle Company, The Matador Ranch, The Bell Co., The 101 Ranch, The Cross L, and most of the others. In some of these they owned the entire outfit, while in others they were part owners. John Adair joined with Charles Goodnight in forming one of the largest cattle ranches in all of Texas. He furnished the money and Goodnight the experience. In the middle eighties it seemed that foreign capital controlled most of the cattle, clear across the country. The English, the Irish, the Scotch were everywhere. They came from London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee. One old-time cowboy relates with pride that he knew several of the great cattlemen and they were all Scotch.

In the early eighties things began to tighten up in the cattle country. The plains were being over-stocked and the attendant evils crept in, making the cattle business a tough game. The days of big profits were over, and, if a company was going to stay in business, reckless spending had to give place to planned economy.

When dividends ceased, the big companies usually sent their representatives into the field to find out what was wrong. That was the time when many of the American managers lost their jobs. They had grown up with the cattle business and were going down with it too, lacking the ingenuity and the perseverance to stem the downward tide.

In all the cow country, the most important man on a cattle ranch was the ranch manager. He was the "King Pin." The payment of dividends depended on his "know how", more than on anything else. Most of the British companies sent their own men to look after their affairs on the ranches. The Prairie Cattle Company sent Murdo McKenzie from Edinburgh as ranch manager and paid him \$20,000 a year. He at once began to pull them out of the hole, after the worst of the disasters in drouth and blizzards were over. After several years of successfully handling the affairs of The Prairie Cattle Co., Murdo McKenzie took over the management of the great Matador Ranch in Texas.

Murdo McKenzie distinguished himself in successfully re-organizing cattle ranching where others had failed. But his is not an isolated case; he was not an exception. Rather, he was of the type of men who were at the head of most of the big ranches pulling them through when the odds were against them.

Of what metal were the British made to make them so successful? Were they schooled financiers, trained in the art of management? The elements of success were in their blood. English integrity and Scottish thrift were basic qualities. They were industrious and high-minded, ever working toward a goal that was worthy of big men.



In the early days on the range cattle business just grew up, following the lines of least resistance. When the Britishers got in the saddle and found that business was slipping, they looked about to stop the leaks and find new ways of doing things. When it became impractical to drive cattle to Montana for fattening, they tried shipping to Kansas pastures, and it worked. When England could not absorb all the surplus cattle which the United States had for export, they looked about for other markets, and found them.



**When day is done for Prairie Cattle Company cowboys on a roundup.**

The first consideration with these men was the improvement of their stock. They were not satisfied with just any kind of a cow. She would probably lose them money. They wanted the best. They experimented with about every breed of cattle they could find. Some of them were brought from their native land. In the end they found that the Herefords stood the test the best.

The Britishers had a full program in the livestock industry. It included the raising of horses, hogs and sheep. In each of these they were as strenuous in their efforts to have the best as they were in the matter of cattle.

British money went into a number of other undertakings that were connected with the livestock industry. They built stockyards in some of the large railroad centers. They established packing plants, and invested in railroads. They owned and operated their own steamship lines with its fleet of ships, some of them handling cattle on foot, others carrying meat under refrigeration.

What was the British influence in the cattle industry, into which they poured forty million dollars? They brought with them a measure of their native English culture and it never wore off. When they came, ranching turned into serious business. They improved the herd and put efficiency into its management. They won a reputation for fair dealing and wherever they went they were honored and respected.

Most of the Britishers who had their money invested on the ranches went to the cities to build their homes, where the children could have the advantages of good schools. They settled in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Denver, where their grandchildren are today. The social set welcomed them with open arms. Colorado Springs came to be known as Little London. The newcomers brought English culture with them and it was contagious. They dressed for dinner; and soon they had all the elite with them, following the hounds.

#### CHAPTER XXVII

## The J. J. Cattle Ranch

In the late 1860's, when cattle raising on the plains of southeastern Colorado was becoming an established industry, there came into the territory two men who were destined to have an important part in leading the way to big business.

These men were J. C. "Jim" Jones and his brother Peyton, cattlemen from Texas. They brought a good-sized herd of the Texas Longhorns with them and settled on the Purgatoire in the "Nine Mile" bottom.

That was years before there was any West Las Animas. Boggsville was capitol of the cowboy country for miles and miles around.

Nine Mile Bottom was one of the choice spots in Bent County, where rich grasses grew tall and could be cut for hay. The Purgatoire carried mountain water sufficient for all and had never been known to go dry. This was the center of rich grazing land that extended far and wide: north to the Arkansas; south to the Cimarron; west to the mountains; and east as far as a man could travel in a day.

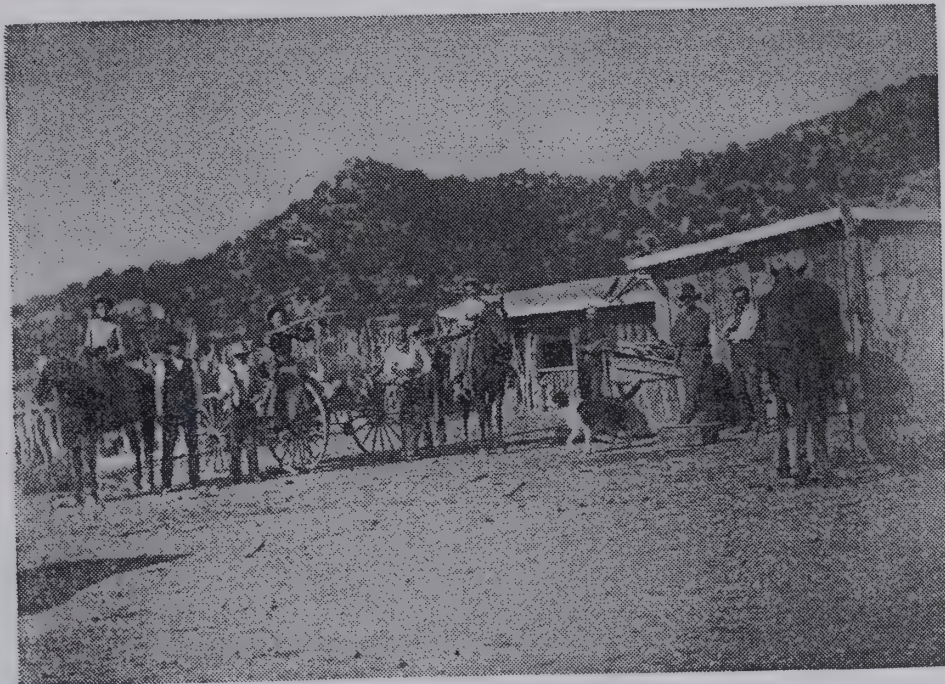
Hither came Jones Bros, the forerunners of the cattle barons, and pitched their tents. The land and the water were free as air. They could settle anywhere, and there was none to say nay. Here they could build the castle of their high hopes, and the sky was the limit.

The new range was virgin territory where the cattle grew sleek and fat. There was good increase and the cattlemen prospered beyond their expectations. They crossed Shorthorns with their Longhorns, thinking



to put heavy beef on the big frames.

They operated as The J. J. Cattle Company and they branded J. J. As opportunity offered, they bought in the holdings of neighboring ranchers in land and cattle. In 1881 they had 30,000 cattle and 16,000 acres of land. In the peak years of their operations they ranged cattle from Higbee east to the Kansas state line and as far south as the Cimarron. On August 23, 1878, they loaded 2,000 cattle at Granada for shipment to the Kansas City market. They filled 98 cattle cars; they had to be handled in several trains.



**Headquarters on the J. J. ranch at Higbee**

As the range became stocked with cattle the cowboys frequently found some that were not branded and it was generally impossible to know where they came from, or who the owners might be. These were called Mavericks. The Bent County Cattle and Horse Growers Ass'n ruled that all these strays should be branded alike (B-4-J) and held for a special sale.

Peyton Jones was a member of the association. One day he went to Mr. P. G. Scott at the Bent County Bank and told him that he had about 500 of the Mavericks branded and that he wanted to pay for them. Mr. Scott, who was treasurer of the association, said to him, "Mr. Jones, you understand how this is. The association is not in position to issue



a bill-of-sale on these cattle". "Yes, I know, and I would be a fool to buy cattle without a bill-of-sale". That was the first time that Mr. Jones ever had such easy picking in enlarging his herd.

The fame of Jones Brothers as successful cattlemen was heard far and wide. Their shipments on the Kansas City markets attracted the attention of buyers from the great consuming centers of the East. Men, at home and abroad, were thus attracted to the cattle business on the great plains of the West.

In 1880, W. R. Green, junior member of the firm of Underwood-Clarke and Co., Land and Stock Brokers of Kansas City, came to Bent County to negotiate with Jones Bros. for the purchase of their ranch. He spent the summer on the range with the men, taking inventory and making note of conditions as he found them. He represented British capital, and was preparing to make an extensive report to his prospective investors. It was not until 1882 that Jones brothers consented to sell. The price agreed upon was \$625,000. This covered land, cattle and equipment. Green made a down payment of \$25,000 and the balance was to be paid through a certain bank.



**Noon hour on the J. J. Cattle Ranch, twenty-five miles south of Las Animas.**

Mr. Green had proved himself to be a clever salesman. As matters stood at that time, profits were large, and the cattle industry had a great future. In a short time Jones brothers realized that they had sold too cheap. They had made a serious blunder, and the bargain had been made binding by the down payment. They tried to have the sale called off, but all efforts failed.

Their efforts continued until the date of payment when it was hoped that there might be failure on the part of the purchasers to make good. On the appointed day, Mr. Jones presented his papers at the bank. The banker pushed the leather bags through the window to him. They con-



Spring roundup days on the J. J. Ranch. This was the big annual event of the year, when the cowboys from all the ranches in southeastern Colorado joined forces under a roundup foreman to gather the cattle together and sort them according to brands.



tained \$600,000 in cash—more than he could carry. The ranch, and all, was gone.

It is not commonly known how many cattle were involved in the J. J. sale, but one writer states that there were 55,000 head. In the last year of their control, Jones brothers branded 11,000 calves. The new owners sold enough cattle in the first two years to pay for the herd, and they had so many cattle left that the ones they sold were not missed. The new owners were the Prairie Cattle Company.

When Jones brothers parted with their cattle to the Prairie Cattle Co., they did not quit the range. They were born cattlemen. It was in their blood. Peyton went to La Junta to live, where he had small business interests. He owned several tracts of land in the county at Las Animas, at Higbee and on Horse Creek where he raised cattle. He was a cattleman to the end of his days.

Jim Jones made Las Animas his home town. He had considerable acreage of good grass land on the Purgatoire, where he ranged horses and cattle. He was fond of fine horses, especially the Hambletonians. He sometimes had as many as 250 of them which he usually sold to the government to be used as cavalry horses.

Mr. Jones was prominent in business and social affairs in Las Animas: he helped finance the building of St. Mary's Church; he established a bank at 615 Carson Avenue; he had the first telephone line in the city—it connected his office with ranch headquarters; he had a nice residence at 705 Carson Avenue, where Mrs. Leedham now lives; he owned the entire block on the east side of the street and used it for his cattle yards. When he finally disposed of his cattle, he donated the block to the county to be used as the courthouse square. Then he went back to Texas to live.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

# The Prairie Cattle Company

In January 1882 the Prairie Cattle Company became the owners and operators of the holdings that had made up the J. J. Ranch. Most of the employees were retained by the new company, so that the work of the ranch might be carried on by men who were familiar with it. Higbee continued to be headquarters for the cowboys, and Gus Johnson was ranch manager.

The Prairie Cattle Company was made up of Scotchmen, most of them living in Edinburgh or Glasgow. The main office was at 2-York Place, Edinburgh.



All was auspicious when the new owners took over the management of the J. J. Ranch. A great future was in sight for the cattle industry. It had grown steadily for nearly twenty years and there was no end in sight to the possibilities for expansion. The markets east of the Mississippi were continually demanding more beef, and foreign markets were opening up. Liverpool was the distributing point for the British Isles. Over its docks were moving shiploads of cattle on foot. New methods of refrigeration had been perfected, and ships were being fitted up to carry vast quantities of dressed beef. In the matter of production the great plains of the West almost had a monopoly. No other section of the country could do it so well.

Before the end of the first year Johnson was replaced by W. R. Green as manager. Green was a broker from Kansas City. He and his associates started out to do big things in a big way, anxious to make a showing with the ranch owners. At the end of 1883, a dividend of 20½ was declared. This was pleasing to the directors in Scotland and it loosened up their purse strings for further investments. Green was pleased with his accomplishment, and put on a big celebration at Christmas time such as had never been known before in the cattle country.

There was to be feasting and dancing with music and games. A six-piece orchestra was engaged, and printed notices were mailed out. Wagons were sent to town to bring back enough food and drink to supply a small army.

What happened to Mr. Green, as manager, we do not know. Perhaps his lavish living was not in keeping with the hand that saves, the way of the Scots. It has been stated that the high dividends paid in the years of his reign were not warranted by actual earnings; but that he forced the issue by selling 21,000 cows, many of them young cattle that should have been retained for breeding purposes. By the end of 1885 the company was done with American managers. The new managers came direct from Scotland in the following order: W. J. Tod, Frank Forest, J. C. Johnson, Mr. Watson, Murdo McKenzie, and Howard Glazbrook. Some of these had their headquarters in Trinidad.

The Prairie Cattle Company had vast resources. It was a great stock company in which anyone could invest: the rich man with his abundance; the servant girl with her savings. The directors were preparing for big business.

Hardly had the work on the ranch settled down to routine at Higbee, when the company purchased two other large ranches: one of them in Colfax county, New Mexico; and the other on the Canadian in Texas. The New Mexico outfit was known as the "Cross L Ranch". It was valued at \$450,000 and involved 45,000 cattle. The Texas ranch was

known as the "LIT". The purchase price was \$240,000 and it had 14,000 cattle and 250 saddle horses.

The three properties acquired by the Prairie Cattle Company joined each other, and extended south from the Arkansas far into New Mexico and Texas. Each of the three had its own ranch headquarters with its local supervisor, but over all was the general manager with office in Pueblo, or sometimes in Trinidad.

With the three ranches combined, The Prairie Cattle Company was a colossal affair. The investment amounted to \$3,500,000 and there were 125,000 cattle. The company owned 2,240,000 acres of land and had leased a lot more. It was the biggest thing of its kind in America.

Of the three holdings, the Colorado property was considered the home ranch. Most of the shipping from this ranch was done at Las Animas and Granada. The company continued to brand J. J. and the statement was frequently made that more J. J. cattle was handled on the Kansas City market than of any other brand. For several years the company was under contract to ship 5,000 head of four-year-old-steers to Mr. Todd at Maplehill, Kansas annually.

Under the management of Murdo McKenzie, large shipments of stock cattle were made to South America, via the gulf ports. Because of inadequate facilities, the big ships had to stop at some distance from shore. The cattle were thrown into the water, one by one, and allowed to drift ashore. This was a laborious task and quite inhumane. McKenzie prevailed upon his company to build an unloading pier for their own use.

Unfortunately, the Prairie Cattle Company had not been in business more than a couple of years when they found themselves running into unexpected difficulties. Some far-reaching changes were taking place, creating conditions that were trying. It put their ingenuity to the test. The range had been so badly overstocked that the cattle were eating the grass too short and were exhausting the water supply. Farmers from beyond the Missouri were coming in and claiming a place in the sun. If the land was free, they wanted a share of it. The theory of free range was a bubble that broke. In the middle eighties came drouth and the dust storms, making the cattle thin—too weak to stand the terrible blizzards that followed.

For a period of about ten years, following 1885, times were tough on the range, and the ledger of the Prairie Cattle Co. sometimes ran red. Assessments had to be levied against the investors. These men fought hard; they trimmed their expenditures to match the income, and enacted economies that would offset the losses. Their everlasting courage, and their persistence, finally got results. For the last 25 years of their op-

erations the company was able to pay reasonable dividends.

Mr. Howard Glazbrook was manager in 1908. In 1912 he began selling land, cattle and horses, as a first step in closing out the business. They had 500 saddle horses. The best land sold at \$2.50 an acre. Matured cattle sold at \$60.00 per head. The company closed its books in 1919, and the most spectacular of all range ventures was at an end.

The best part of the story of The Prairie Cattle Company is not told in the success, or failure, of the managers to pay dividends, but in the way they played the game. J. J. represents a famous cattle brand and is a symbol of sturdy men; men who never gave up when pressed by vicissitudes that would wreck others.

## CHAPTER XXIX

# The Twenty Four Circle Ranch

The story of the Twenty Four Circle Ranch would fill a book, if it could be written in detail. These few pages are written to help preserve the history of the ranch and to submit to you our humble effort to portray something of the struggle for existence that the Cattle Barons endured through a quarter of a century, beginning 1886.

This quarter of a century was a period of transition, from the era of "Free Range" to the more modern, more systematic, and highly scientific age, when cattle are held in smaller numbers and better cared for.

The transition was not easy of accomplishment. Land ownership was a first consideration and launching into farming operations was another. With the devastations wrought by nature in the middle eighties, the hand-writing on the wall warned the wise that the cattle industry, as carried on in the early days, was on the way out and, if the industry was going to survive, cattlemen would have to devise some radical means of meeting the rapidly changing conditions.

Unfortunately, the Scottish Syndicate that promoted the Twenty Four Circle ranch, entered the game at a most inopportune time. The bubble of the "Free Range" had burst. The cream of the crop had been drawn off. The lush years were gone forever and big dividends would be no more.

When the new management had gotten established on the ranch and realized something of the odds that were against them, they were astonished, but not dismayed. Then the Scottish traits of integrity, business sagacity, and "know how", asserted themselves. A careful analysis was made of conditions that had contributed to disaster and plans were



devised for operating on a more stable basis.

The Twenty Four Circle ranch company had headquarters at Prowers, a station on the Santa Fe railroad, nine miles west of Lamar and 25 miles east of Las Animas. There they had a nice group of substantial buildings, mostly made of stone. There were extensive corrals with fences built high and strong. The whole group had the appearance of stability, and gave the impression of a ranch well managed.

The main building was a story and a half high and was used as an office and a home for the ranch Manager. It still stands and is occupied by the people who own the land at this time. They also use it for a mercantile establishment, known as Prowers Store.

The story of the area occupied by the Twenty Four Circle ranch is a part of the very early history of this part of the Arkansas Valley, and goes back to the middle seventies when one Thomas O'Lary came along and made settlement there. He thought that he had found the garden spot of the earth and he wanted the world to come and see. His appeals appeared frequently in the Las Animas Leader. He called the place Meadows and by that name it was known until comparatively recent times.

About 1877 Henry Gilman settled at Meadows with his family which consisted of his wife and two boys, Frank and Shake, also "Tomboy" Alice. Henry's first venture was to buy a few cattle. That pleased the boys for they would cowboys be; and that's how the cattle ranch got started.

But the Gilmans were rovers, always wanting to live in the thin fringe of civilization and ever ready to move when too many neighbors moved in, too close. After two or three years they sold their holdings to John W. Prowers. Mr. Prowers passed away in 1884 and the property passed into the hands of Dan Keesee.

Then, for several years, ranch affairs moved along on uneven keel. The passing of Mr. Prowers made a difference. Dan Keesee tried, for a time to carry on as his predecessor had done but failed in his feeble attempt. Then he turned the property over to some of his relatives but they failed too. The odds seemed against them. Some of the assets became liabilities; notes came due and mortgages too. The day of reckoning came upon them in 1908.

The creditors were Scotchmen who formed a syndicate to be known as The Phillips Investment Company and took over the ranch in foreclosure. James Cushney was placed in charge as Ranch Manager.

The members of the Phillips Investment Company were not cattlemen and were not particularly interested in the cattle industry. Rather they represented an investment trust, interested in picking up invest-

ment bargains for quick returns. About 1915 the company began negotiations with another Scottish Syndicate for the sale of their land, livestock, and all ranch equipment at Prowers, Colorado. Within a few months the terms of the sale had been agreed upon and the transfer of ownership was accomplished in 1916.

The new owners were members of the firm of The John Clay Livestock Commission Company of Kansas City, Mo. This company was, at that time, and is now, a very large firm with branch establishments in Chicago, Omaha, Denver, El Paso, and other places. Mr. John Clay was originally the head of the firm. Mr. Claude Vance now holds the position vacated by Mr. Clay, at time of his death, many years ago.

The new owners of the ranch were listed as John Clay, James Reid, J. G. Forrest, John Todd, James Cushney, and Geo. A. Fowler. Mr. Cushney was the heaviest investor and he was retained as ranch manager. These men organized as The Prowers Ranch and Mercantile Company. Their holdings continued to be known as The Twenty Four Circle Ranch.

The firm was capitalized at \$100,000 but within a few years two assessments were made on the stockholders. The inventory dated January 31, 1923 showed assets of \$275,550.70; a financial statement dated February 15th of that year showed holdings of \$241,629.22. At that time the company owned about 6,000 acres of land and they had 800 head of high grade white faced cattle. In the early days the ranch was said to have consisted of 20,000 acres.

The location at Prowers was ideal for a cattle ranch. A part of the area was known, in the early days, for its "Big Timber". "Big Timber" extended for several miles along the south side of the river, the same as on the north side. In summer its spreading branches offered shade. In winter they afforded protection from the storm. Game was abundant. The river furnished ample water for all needs. There were 1,728 acres under cultivation, most of which was irrigated. The headgate was four miles west of headquarters, where lived John Darling in charge. A mile and a half west of Prowers was the "Upper Ranch", consisting of a good ranch house, with substantial barns and corrals. Jim Scott was the foreman in charge.

Most of the land was on the south side of the river where there was a broad expanse of old river bed, very rich. Most of this was used for the growing of wheat and alfalfa. In a single year the company shipped 100 car-loads of alfalfa and four cars of wheat. The new owners were farmers as well as cattlemen. On the north side of the river they grew milo maize which they harvested for winter feed.

A considerable acreage of the ranch land, on both sides of the river,

was used for pasture. However, most of the cattle were on the "Public Range"—some miles south of Prowers, from April 15 to October 15 each year. On these, the government charged a fixed fee, per head, for the season.

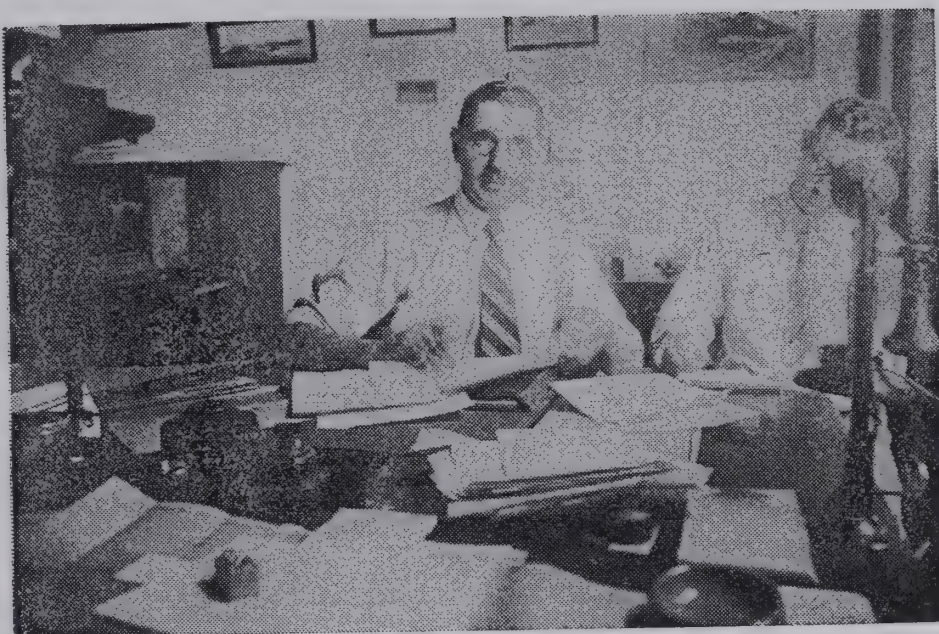
In the first quarter of the century a cattle ranch was operated under difficulties and running a farm was not much easier. A short time before Mr. Cushney left the ranch he wrote a long letter to Mr. Forrest, of the Kansas City office, explaining some of the difficulties under which he was working. Prices were low and the cost of production squeezed out all the profit. His worst trouble was with the hired help. Most of the laborers came from Mexico and didn't know how to do anything. A foreman had to stay right with them and show them how to do every little thing. One of them, named Pete, finally learned to irrigate and became good at it, so that was his job. The difficulty was that he got drunk too often and stayed drunk too long. That messed up the works. One day the boss promised him that he would give him a bonus of \$5.00 each month if he stayed sober. Pete liked the idea and called it a bargain. All went well until pay day came, then he "Hot footed" to Lamar, where he made a tour of the taverns. When he was well organized and ready to put on a show, down the street he'd go, firing his revolver and shouting, "I'm Pistol Pete from the Twenty Four Circle." That kept up until the sheriff caught up with him, disarmed him, and put him in jail. After a few days rest, and time for meditation, Pete was fit for work again and his host sent him back to the ranch.

Life at Ranch Headquarters was never dull. There was something happening every day. Mr. Cushney was a bachelor, so had to have a cook, a housekeeper if possible. One time he hired a Fred Harvey girl, and she was a dandy, but she wouldn't stay as the boss was too exacting. The next was a man, big fellow, "Klonnie" Murray of Klondike fame, the man with one eye. He had been a miner most of his life. One day, when he was handling explosives, hot ashes from his pipe dropped in the pot, and spoiled one eye.

Early in 1922 the Prowers Ranch and Mercantile Company undertook to dispose of the Twenty Four Circle Ranch. Their sale price was \$235,000, but as no buyer was found who would pay that price for everything, Mr. Claude Vance finally succeeded in liquidating the company by selling part of the ranch to different individuals or companies. The government bought a considerable acreage for the development of the Caddoa damsite and Reservoir. Mr. R. H. Klett also bought a substantial portion.

Memories of The Twenty Four Circle Ranch will linger long in the minds of the people of Bent and Prowers counties. The Managers were





**Richard Learmonth, assistant manager of the Twenty Four Circle Ranch, in his office at Prowers in 1914.**

well known and all of them were considered "Good Scouts". Many of the employees had their homes in Lamar, where their descendants may still be found.

Of the Manager, Mr. James Cushney stayed the longest and was best known to fame. He was born in Scotland in 1864, the son of a minister and was educated at Mills Institution, a famous school on the River Spey. He came to America at the age of 19 and got a job on a cattle ranch. In 1897 he joined the John Clay Commission Company. In 1921 he left the ranch because of ill health, and returned to Scotland, where he died in March 1922. Mr. Cushney was a typical Scotchman, well educated, dignified and a man of high ideals—unselfish to a marked degree.

Associated with Mr. Cushney, for a few years, as assistant manager, was Mr. Richard Learmonth—1912-1914. Mr. Learmonth now lives in Kansas City where he has his office and is busy all the day. He seems to have the best fund of information on the Twenty Four Circle Ranch now in existence. He remembers many of the "Old Timers" of Bent county and they remember him. He has fond recollections of happy days on the ranch.

Following Mr. Cushney as Manager came Mr. R. L. Stephens who was very well known in Las Animas and Lamar. He remained until



**Branding cattle on the Twenty Four Circle Ranch at Prowers, October 1913.**

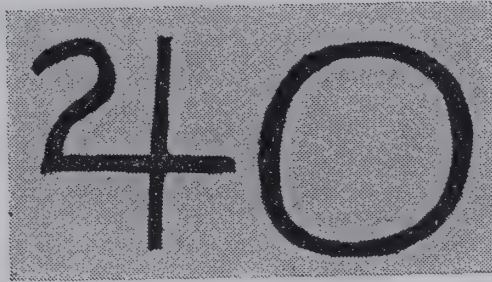


**Headquarters of the Twenty Four Circle Ranch at Prowers, Colo. fifteen miles east of Las Animas, occupied by the Scottish manager for a quarter of a century.**



the ranch company was liquidated. He passed away at Las Animas about 1943 and was buried at Lamar. His daughter, Mrs. Tyree G. Newbill lives in Kansas City where she holds an important position in relief work.

The history of The Twenty Four Circle Ranch is quite different from that of many of the other cattle ranches of earlier days. Its annals are clean and honorable. The owners had a reputation for fairness. They were big men who had grown up in the broad country. Hard were the experiences in those days and meager the reward, but these men endured, with a halo over their heads. In the sixties raising cattle on the range was a new industry. It was a crude business at the beginning, until the British influence and Scottish prudence trimmed the corners and replaced mismanagement with systematic handling.





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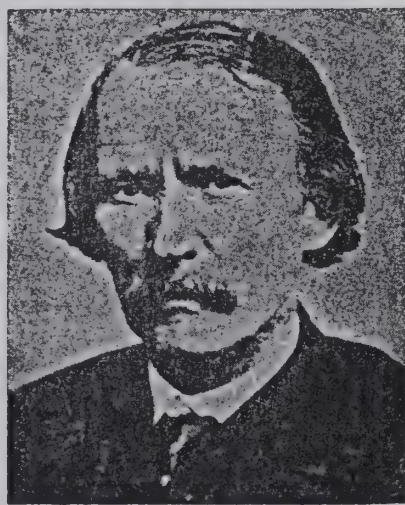
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Approximate distances,  
 Fort Wise to Sand Creek-41 Mi.  
 Fort Bent to Fort Lyon -17 Mi.  
 Fort Lyon to Fort Wise -20 Mi.  
 Ft.Wise to Choteau's 11-36 Mi.





*Kit Carson*













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